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DEMOCRACY AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT

IT has happened once more. It happens too often. It must not happen again. That is our reflection on the news that the Habsburg pretender to the Austrian throne is in charge of the recruiting for a special Austrian regiment in the American army. The facts are not in dispute. The American army decided some little time ago to give "drafted" men of European or Asiatic origin or descent the option of joining regiments which are to have a distinctive national character. This is in principle a happy inspiration. There are to be Norwegian and Filipino units, as, if we remember rightly, there were Chinese units in the last war. The Austrian refugees, under General Julius Deutsch, who was War Minister in the early days of the Republic and afterwards served in Spain, had been asking for the creation of a unit drawn from their own stock. Their prayer has been granted after long delays, but the recruitment of this battalion has been placed under a committee headed by the Archduke Otto. At a birthday dinner in honour of the Pretender a letter was read from Mr. Stimson, the Secretary of the War Department, addressed to "Otto of Austria," which accepted as the body in charge of the recruiting for this battalion the "Military Committee for the Liberation of Austria" of which he is the head. This cannot be excused, as the conduct of General Eisenhower in North Africa has been, on the ground that he is an innocent soldier ignorant of European politics. Mr. Stimson, who was the head of the State Department during Mr. Hoover's Presidency, is a specialist in foreign policy, who must have known perfectly well what he was doing. The outcry, when the news came out, was so loud that he was obliged to issue a statement to the effect that his act did not amount to recognition of Habsburg claims to restoration. A tendency and a preference have, none the less, been indicated which all can read. One result has been that both the Austrian Socialists in America and the Democrats led by Count Ferdinand Czernin have repudiated any connection with the Habsburg Battalion and advised their adherents to join other units of the American army.

It is possible that the dismay of the American public may be relieved in this case, as in the Darlan affair, by the assurance of the State Department that in due course an election will be held, which will enable the people of France and presumably of Austria also to determine their own future. Such promises are worthless. If the liberating armies march into Vienna with a Habsburg battalion at their head, and if in the first phases of re-organisation, when the army will inevitably form a military administration, monarchists and clerical Fascists are put in charge of Austrian life, the process of self-determination will be prejudiced from the start. This provisional administration will distribute the foods and raw materials promised by the United Nations, which means that to it every Austrian citizen, whether worker or employer, will have to look for the chance of work and indeed of life itself. It will control the press and the wireless and will presumably have the power to intern its political opponents. On its favour the Trade Unions and the Workers' parties will have to depend, if they should try after years of suppression to come out into the open. The State Department has proposed that this *interim* period in Europe shall be prolonged for at least three years before any definite peace is established. To suggest that free elections could be held, after the reaction had had such a chance to consolidate itself, is to delude the simple citizen. In this particular case we feel no excessive alarm. Neither the Czechs nor the Jugoslavs will tolerate a Habsburg restoration. But by such means a Clerico-Fascist provisional administration of the Dollfuss or Schuschnigg type could easily be installed. The same threat would hang over France, if Admiral Darlan's army should lead the way in her "liberation," and a similar technique could be used in Italy and Hungary. We are not alone in feeling an uneasy curiosity about the recent mission of the American envoy, Mr. Myron Taylor, to the Vatican. The propertied conservative class in America, terrified lest Communism or Socialism should play a part in the creation of the new Europe, tends to look on clerical Fascism as the most hopeful alternative. That is why it smiles on Darlan, on Franco and now on Otto Habsburg.

No irreparable harm has yet been done, though in France as among ourselves the fears of a betrayal is undermining the confidence of youth in the men, on both sides of the Atlantic, who lead us. While the Americans reproach us, with only too much justice, about freedom in India, we have our own grounds for doubting them. We are glad that our own Government has treated the Fighting French fairly by placing them, under General Legentilhomme, in charge of Madagascar. We print with pleasure this week an article by one of them, which vividly expresses the feelings of underground France. General de Gaulle, because he was the first soldier of distinction who refused in the hour of collapse to despair, has become the symbol of resistance. There is always a danger in accepting any soldier, even in wartime, as a political leader. The merit of General de Gaulle in our eyes is that he is acting with this underground movement (socialist and radical as well as democratic-catholic), in which we see the hope of the future. When such men as Herriot and Léon Blum are freed, he will not, we believe, impede the creation of the Fourth Republic. A Darlan, on the other hand, means either triumphant reaction or civil war. His pledge to retire into private life leaves us sceptical; his claim to have "amnestied" all who sympathised with the Allies appears mere impertinence, while the President's assurance that North Africa fortified with Darlan's new declaration, is "definitely allied" with "liberalism" sounds naive. The 900 men of the International Brigade, who made the mistake of fighting for freedom before it was the fashion, are still in slavery in the Sahara, nor is there yet any good news about the Spanish Republican internees. Mr. Roosevelt has an excessively difficult team to drive. The highly conservative State Department has elbowed Mr. Henry Wallace's more amateur organisation out of the way in matters of post-war economic planning. The Army, with a tendency to megalomania at the top, was apt to grab supplies that should go to Russia and China, because it dreamed of an exclusively American victory

two years hence. The landing in North Africa leads us to hope that a saner strategy has been adopted. The Nazi massacres in Poland remind us that if we delay the liberation of Europe too long, there will be fewer Europeans to liberate. These divergencies of view, as much over politics as over strategy, make an unanswerable case for the common control of all our plans by the United Nations in concert. We have a right to be consulted and so have the Russians, before a Darlan or an Otto Habsburg is favoured.

Rommel's Retreat.

Rommel's last moment decision to evacuate what looked like a strong position at El Agheila may prove costly to him. He has probably got the bulk of his force away towards Misurata; but his retreat has been harassed and disorganised by our air force, which he allowed us time to bring well forward, and there seems to be a good chance that his rearguard may be intercepted and overwhelmed. Looking further ahead, our guess is that German strategy will not try to defend Tripolitania seriously. Nature did not design its flat and sandy wastes for such a purpose and art has done little to improve upon her work. What the Germans must do is to deny to us the use of the Sicilian Narrows. To this end it is the coast of Tunisia they must hold. The French had built the so-called Maretti Line—fortified in depth, just behind the Tunisian-Libyan frontier. Will Rommel withdraw to this line and attempt to hold it against the Eighth Army, while at the other end of the Narrows Tunis and Bizerta are defended against our First Army? In that case his rear would be vulnerable. What may have led to some such decision is the fact that our Navy and Air Force had recently been successful in preventing the arrival of supplies to the Germans in Libya. But from Sicily it is easier for them to supply their forces in Tunis. There is little fresh to report about the doings of the First Army there.

An unseasonable thaw has hampered the movements of both sides on the Russian fronts. The Red Army has scored some successes but on a relatively small scale. It cannot do much in a big way until the Don is solidly frozen at Voronezh and again at the bend, forty miles from Stalingrad. The threat to which we referred last week—a German mechanised column massed near Kotelnikovo, for a rush north-east to relieve Stalingrad—has so far been held by the Russians. It struck, dented their lines and then stood still.

Agriculture in the Balance

It is said that in the New Year the Government proposes to get down seriously to the problem of post-war agricultural policy. Mr. Hudson's appeal to farmers to plough up yet another million acres will be likely to put the National Farmers' Union in a mood to demand yet more extensive protection for home agriculture than they would have demanded if it had not been made. This does not mean that Mr. Hudson is wrong in issuing the appeal; for evidently the strain on shipping is destined to be very severe during the coming year—indeed, it will be the more severe the more the war passes to a definitely offensive stage on our side. The danger in this matter plainly is that the planning of home agriculture may be done in advance of, and in disregard of, any international planning broad enough to cover the agricultural areas of Europe as well as of the rest of the world. It has always to be borne in mind that the higher the standard of living we propose to assure to our own agricultural producers, the smaller will be the employment capacity of the agricultural industry we shall be in a position to maintain. This is the case, both because there is a limit to the total subsidy we can afford to give to agriculture, even in the short period, and because an agriculture based on high wages will necessarily resort more largely to labour-saving methods. Our wartime agricultural policy has been partly haphazard, in the sense that it has been based on letting the farmers produce pretty much what they please, provided only they produce more of something. Such a policy plainly affords no basis for reconstruction, which will have to rest on a real foundation of international, and not merely national, planning. The prospects of our export trades depend very greatly on what we are willing to buy after the war from the agricultural producers in other parts of the world, including Europe; and we ought to be getting down to this problem (and not only to that of immediate post-war relief) as a preliminary to the planning of our own agriculture.

Exeunt the Arts

The new call-up regulations for eighteen-year-olds apparently mean the end, for the duration, of arts courses at the universities, as far as men are concerned. A tiny proportion of wholly unfit men may perhaps remain; but arts work will during the next academic year be practically confined to women. At least, we suppose and hope the women will be allowed to go on with their courses; for it will be an exceedingly serious matter if the entire supply of graduates, except in medical and a few selected scientific subjects, is to be swept away. There is, we should think, a strong case, not merely for letting the women go on, but for admitting a larger number; for it is common knowledge that this could be done, at any rate in the older universities, without lowering the standards of admission. Failing some such measure, the shortage of skilled entrants not only to the teaching profession but to other social service occupations and to many other walks of life is bound to be very serious at the critical time when reconstruction schemes fall due to be put into effect. It is all very well to say that places have to be kept open for those who will come back from the armed forces or from other forms of war service. What this argument omits is that these returning recruits will need training after their return, and that there is certain to be an acute shortage of trained personnel for years after the war, as new schemes of education and social service are brought into operation. The demand for teachers involved in even the more modest of the educational changes at present under discussion is staggeringly in excess of the prospective supply, and teaching is only one among a number of callings that will be crying out for qualified recruits. The position will no doubt be eased in the long run by the effects of the special courses now being held in the universities for naval and air force cadets; and it is to be hoped and expected that in this field the Army will follow the example of the other services.

The Labour Reserve

As the Beveridge Report is more closely examined, its provisions appear more modest than they do at first reading. The student ceases to be swept away by their comprehensiveness, and begins to look at the details and at the underlying assumption. He then realises, in particular, how very modest Sir William Beveridge's conception of what he calls "full employment" really is; for apparently in Sir Wiliam's mind "full employment" is compatible with, though it does not positively involve, an average level of unemployment as high, year in and year out, as 10 per cent. of the insured population. Possibly we should say no more than that Sir William, in order to be well on the safe side, has so framed his balance sheet that there will be no deficit in the Social Security Fund even if unemployment works out at as high an average as 10 per cent. Whether or no, this is surely a much higher loss of productive power than Great Britain will be in any way able to afford during the post-war years; and it seems out of relation to Sir William's insistence on the need for keeping old people who are still fit for work after reaching the normal pensionable age in employment after that age, on the plea that the product of their labour will be needed. Surely "full employment," in any sense in which it can be regarded as a satisfactory objective of post-war policy, involves an unemployment ratio much below an average of 10 per cent.? Surely 10 per cent. should be regarded as a maximum, including cyclical as well as other forms of unemployment, rather than as an average of good and bad years? Some industries, either exceptionally casual or discontinuous in their nature, or exceptionally liable to post-war disturbances, may need a higher surplus of labour at the point of greatest construction. But most industries should be able to do with a great deal less, if we really mean to pursue a policy of high production and to make short work of the monopolistic influences which, before the war, were allowed to damp production down in the interests of high profit-margins for their shareholders.

The Beveridge Report

Everyone interested in the future of this country and in the prospects of the post-war world wants to understand the contents of the Beveridge Report. Comparatively few can give the time or concentrated attention necessary for reading the original document. Nor can a bare summary of the contents meet the case. We believe, therefore, that we are supplying a very general need in publishing *Beveridge Explained*, by G. D. H. Cole. The first copies of this six-penny pamphlet, which contains as much matter as many books at ten times the price, will be on sale when this journal appears on the bookstalls. The whole edition will be available early next week.

We believe that Mr. Cole has done a masterly job. This is not Beveridge boiled down, but Beveridge predigested. Mr. Cole, in brief, explains exactly what the issues are and what Sir William's proposals involve. He explains the way in which Sir William's proposals form a unified scheme. We must face the assumptions if we are to discuss the details. Mr. Cole believes, as we do, that the Beveridge Scheme can be put into effect, and his object is not to criticise, but to give an exposition of the document on what, perhaps more than any other, the social and political controversies of our time will resolve. He recognises, as we do, that important interests will be opposed to it. He does not argue that it would at once solve all the social problems that we have to face, but he shows that it is a practical method of providing that social security and freedom from fear of unemployment which has haunted our generation more than any other single misery. The method is not Socialism; rather, we should say, it is a scheme whose acceptance or rejection will be the test of Capitalism's capacity to adjust to the social needs of the twentieth century.

India

Responsible Indian leaders continue to seek a way out of the present deadlock. During last week-end, representatives of Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Parsees, the Christians, the Sikhs, Liberals, Labour, Communists and Indian commercial bodies met in Allahabad for a conference presided over by Sir Tej Sapru. Mr. Rajagopalachari was there too, and both he and Sir Tej commented on the friendly and helpful spirit shown by the delegates. All were agreed that an all-parties conference could work out a general settlement provided that the British Government would express its willingness, while safeguarding the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, to give a provisional Government full powers of administration and release the Congress leaders to enable them to take part in such a Conference. Speakers also suggested that civil disobedience would be difficult to end without some such declaration on the part of the British Government. On the question of the Muslim demands, several speakers welcomed the efforts made by Mr. Rajagopalachari to come to some agreement with Mr. Jinnah. Others suggested that this was dangerous appeasement and the fear was expressed in some quarters that the British Government might accept the demands of the Muslim League without giving power to a National Government.

What will the Government do now? Must it continue to ignore or rebuff the efforts of responsible Indians who hate, as much as any British official, the anarchy and violence and counter-violence now ruling in parts of India? The effects of the deadlock are disastrous not only inside India but far beyond her frontiers. Again

and again since last August Indian leaders have put forward proposals which have never received more than a frozen welcome from Mr. Amery, and a spate of propaganda from his Department aimed at showing how impossible it was to find a settlement of this complicated problem of India. Mr. Rajagopalachari, the Hindu Mahasabha, the British-Indian Association, the Indian Liberals, the Calcutta business men, a group of 32 British missionaries, the Sikhs, the Jats, the members of the Muslim League in Bombay—all have issued appeals or statements putting forward suggestions for forming a National Government; and most of them explicitly ask for the opportunity to collaborate with Britain in the defence of India.

Again, may we ask the Labour Party what reply it sent to an appeal cabled by Mr. N. M. Joshi, General Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress? They cannot suggest that he is an extremist or an irresponsible person. He is elderly, moderate, and a member of the Servants of India, a group of men who command universal respect. In urging that steps can still be taken to release the Congress leaders and organise a National Government, he says that the British people do not realise the feeling of frustration felt by Indians who want "to take over the responsibility of defending their country, if only Britishers do not hesitate to transfer power to them." The solution of the Indian problem, he urges, is in British hands and they alone can do it, and they must do it immediately.

The Government wanders round in a vicious circle. The Indian problem, they say, is a domestic problem, and Indian leaders must find a solution. But when any solution is proposed they reply that the people supporting it have no following. And then comes the second vicious circle; the Hindu-Muslim dispute prevents a solution. When Mr. Rajagopalachari, after spending many hours discussing this problem with Mr. Jinnah, feels confident that a discussion with Mr. Gandhi would help to bridge the gap, the Viceroy turns down his proposal for the visit. What is the explanation? If the British Government really desires a settlement there is no lack of responsible and moderate men like Rajagopalachari, Sapru and Joshi, who are ready to work for a settlement and whose desire is to form a National Government to combine with the British Government in the defence of India.

THE HORROR IN POLAND

"Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

THAT is a Christian in the sixteenth century admonishing a Jew. Three hundred years or more have passed over Christian Europe, and the utterance of Portia is superseded by "there can be no mercy for the Jew"; and if anyone should doubt Hitler's claim to speak on behalf of European culture, there is his own announcement: "To-day I believe that I act according to the mind of the Almighty Creator: in beating off the Jew I fight for the work of the Lord."

The horror of the treatment of the Jews outruns the power of comment. In the last two years in Poland two million, we are told, have been murdered; two million more are now being prepared for the shambles. Yet murder is the best, and not the worst, of their fates. We hear of victims offering to their Nazi executioners all the money that is left to them as their shooting fee; the details that have been received of the treatment of those who are unsuccessful in contriving to be shot are unprintable.

It may be that the genius of a Swift or a Voltaire could rise in the savagery of its indignation to the height of this theme, but from most of us comment is anti-climax.

Yet the horror carries certain morals which we do well to draw. First, how slippery is the slope that leads to barbarism, and with what horrifying rapidity those whose feet are set upon it begin to slide. Standards of humanity and restraint which have taken centuries to build up disappear in a decade. It is only nine years ago that Göring was telling us: "The German government will never tolerate the persecution of a person just because he is a Jew," and that Hitler was claiming "not a single hair of a Jew's head has been touched." Five years later Gauleiter Globozek is announcing that "the phrase that, after all, the Jews are human beings will never have the least effect upon us." Another five years, and there is the horror of Poland. Less than one hundred years ago John Stuart Mill was writing: "It is too much to profess to be afraid lest barbarism, after having been fairly got under, should revive and conquer civilisation," while as recently as 1913 Professor Bury affirmed in his *History of the Freedom of Thought* that "the struggle of reason against authority has ended in what appears now to be a decisive and permanent victory for liberty."

Secondly, one observes with melancholy interest how rapidly the capacity for indignation becomes fatigued. When the first atrocities of the German concentration camps were reported, most of us were first incredulous and then so aghast that many of the papers deliberately withheld the details. But familiarity grows with repetition, and contempt with familiarity, so that to-day,

"all pity choked with custom of fell deed,"

we shrug our shoulders at horrors which have ceased, by dint of repetition, to be "news." It is only when mankind takes a fresh and sensational plunge into the abyss of savagery, as in the proposal to exterminate the remainder of the Jews from the Warsaw ghetto, that our jaded appetites are roused to a new, albeit a brief, protest.

Thirdly, there is the inevitable question, "How can this thing be stopped, and what can I personally do to stop it?" The answer is: "Here and now in Europe. Very little, except by hastening, by all means in my power, the defeat of the Nazis." If anything were needed to strengthen our determination that this war must at all costs be won, it is afforded by the news from Poland. Some, the Archbishop of York, for instance, seek to satisfy their just feelings of anger and compassion by dwelling on the retribution to follow our victory. The pleasures connected with retribution are admittedly great; there is the pleasure of lying in bed at night devising schemes for inflicting, with what loving detail, upon each of the torturers precisely those sufferings which he has perpetrated upon his helpless victims—an eye, in fact, for an eye. There is the slightly more adult pleasure of allowing one's imagination to dwell upon an avenging tribunal, cold, emotionless, and dispassionate, pronouncing in tones of measured justice the judgment of humanity upon the degraded sadists in the dock as a preliminary to their painless extermination.

But these horrors are too important to be left to the gospel of sentiment. We have to ask what we shall accomplish. If threats of retribution had a deterrent effect they could be neither too frequent nor too menacing; but will the culprits hear of them? Will they, if they do hear of them, take heed? For must we not suppose that most of them still feel secure in their assurance of Nazi victory. Or will they, even if they feel a twinge of fear, be prepared to relinquish the substantial pleasures of cruelty, pleasures which grow with what they feed on? Meanwhile, one must not forget the effects of retribution threats upon our enemies. Already Goebbels makes use of our threats, trying to consolidate resistance by proclaiming that the English are committed to a policy of wholesale extermination. Threats are meaningless as part of political warfare unless they tend to divide the enemy by specifying those who are actively responsible for the crimes committed.

The horrors are unspeakable, the indignation justified, and the reaction natural. If we mistrust talk of retribution it is partly because we have experience of its futility. Those who cried most for vengeance in the last war were those who were quickest to describe the actual retribution which came as Bolshevism. After this war, even more than after the last war, the problem will be to liquidate the true perpetrators of evil. There will be no lack of executioners. They wait their chance in every occupied country. No one need worry lest the German people escape suffering. To shout now for retribution is to side-track serious thinking. It does not help to win the war; it does not protect the Jews. It does not improve the prospect of a peace in which such monstrous acts of barbarism become impossible.

What, then, apart from hastening victory by all means in our power, can we do? One very relevant task lies within our power. We have seen how easily the poison of anti-semitism spreads and to what destructive use it is put by those who seek power for themselves. The pogrom had a long history before it was raised to these incredible dimensions by Hitler. Like other loathsome diseases, anti-semitism spreads where the conditions are suitable: the virus gets no hold where the society is healthy. Tolerant Britain has been largely immune in the past. To-day no observer will deny some symptoms of the disease. So far it is largely confined to a few infected areas. It has no violent manifestations. But let us remember how unobtrusive the first steps towards barbarism always are and how rapid the slide once the first steps have been taken. Taking warning from the Continent, let us resolve to stop this growth while still in infancy. Here surely lies the first duty of the Archbishop, who rightly sees anti-semitism as part of the decline of civilised values. Let him warn the Christian people of Britain that in striving to extirpate the horror from the Continent they may be in some danger of catching the infection. Let him tell each member of his congregation that it is his duty when he meets anti-semitism to denounce it for the evil it is. All the arguments about whether Jews are nice or nasty people are irrelevant. They are not being tortured and killed on the Continent for their racial faults or their peculiar virtues. They die because it is always part of the technique of Fascism to exploit their unpopularity and to revive the ancient prejudices against them. They have been tortured because they are helpless; they die now because, being tortured and outlawed, they are potentially dangerous to the sadists who rule Europe. It is our business to rescue them as soon as we can, to overthrow the power of the sadists, and to see to it that neither on the Continent nor in our own country do similar practices or habits of thought find root. They will not find root in any country whose institutions ensure equality before the law and whose people have learnt to guard their liberties and treat each other, irrespective of race, colour, and creed, with tolerance, courtesy, and goodwill.

There is one final and immediately practical suggestion. We are glad to learn of a movement, sponsored by the Chief Rabbi, for evacuating Jewish children from German-occupied Europe under the supervision of a neutral Power. As we write, negotiations are still in progress. What is now wanted is an unequivocal statement from the Allied Governments that, should the scheme prove feasible, they will be prepared to receive the children and arrange for their accommodation in some part of the territories under their control. Without the assurance that the children can be taken away from Europe, neutral countries that might otherwise receive them fear to do so. We cannot believe that our own Government will be unwilling to lend its assistance to so beneficent a scheme; we cannot now save millions of innocent people who die in this holocaust, but we can see to it that some of their children have a chance of living in a saner world.

PUBLIC OPINION IN FRANCE TO-DAY

[The author of this article, Mr. Morandat, a metallurgical worker from Savoy, aged about 29, a militant trade-unionist, fought in Norway, and has been an active member of resistance movements in France. He arrived in London last month, shortly after the total occupation of France. He writes as an enthusiastic Gaulliste. Reference is made to his picture of France in the front page of this issue.—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

ON the 18th November, 1942, the three chief resistance movements, *Libération*, *Combat* and *Franc-Tireur* issued a declaration expressing their bitterness at the Darlan affair; affirming their intention, in spite of it, to pursue the war which the people of France, under conditions far more difficult than those of regular soldiers, have never ceased to wage and demanding that all liberated territories be placed under the authority of the fighting forces of General de Gaulle.

I had left France a few days previously. For the past year I had worked in the resistance movements. I think, therefore, that I am qualified to speak of opinion in my country.

But I cannot do this without, in the first place, speaking about "Gaullisme". The majority of ordinary French people to-day (most of the exceptions are among those whose material position paid them to "wait and see" or to "collaborate") regard themselves as soldiers. The enthusiasm was great when, after the manifestations of July 14th, 1942, the name of "Free France" was officially changed to "Fighting France" so as to include in a single movement the fighting forces inside and outside France under the fighting leadership of General de Gaulle. To speak of the fighting people of France without reference to their armed compatriots abroad is to speak of an army without its material, its objectives, its leader. I am prejudiced? Indeed I am—in favour of the cause for which the Allies went to war, for which so many of my compatriots are fighting and suffering to-day, and which a small minority, inside and outside France, still seeks to betray. From this point of view the total occupation of France, the Darlan affair and the tragedy of Toulon are mixed evils. For now the issues are too clear to deceive even the most gullible; they certainly do not deceive the "attentistes" and "collaborationists." One of the leading figures in the resistance movements of the "unoccupied" zone told me, on the day the Germans entered into his city, that he was overjoyed.

Hence I cannot express the stupefaction I felt, as a militant syndicalist and democrat, when I found that there could still be people, in the camp of the free democracies, who failed to see, in all its stark reality, the symbolism of the two present rallying-points. On the one hand, the man whose refusal to despair has been like a powerful electric current igniting, sustaining, unifying the French people. On the other hand, the man whose initial despair has led him from infamy to infamy, from gagging and murdering our people to sending them to kill and be killed by their compatriots and their allies in Syria and Madagascar and Russia, and which commits him, for good, to collaboration with Hitler because only by dividing and weakening France can he hope to protect himself from her vengeance. I am the more amazed at this lack of understanding since all those elements who want to maintain Vichy, and to prevent the Allied victory from being a victory of the peoples, of political and social democracy, are rallying to Darlan—whether it be Governor-Generals who want to keep their personal hold on territories which belong not to themselves but to France, or the small fry—the Chautemps, Bergerys, Pucheus and the rest—who hope to secure their pickings of the spoils. What unites them is fear of de Gaulle and of the French people.

But this handful of more or less prominent traitors, with their variously named condottiere bands, weigh little enough in the balance against the entire French people—unless they are supported by foreign arms.

To illustrate French solidarity I cannot do better than quote from the paper *Libération*, for which I worked and of which I shall speak further on. In its number of 24th June, 1942, it wrote:

> Thanks to you, Gentlemen of Vichy, and thanks to your Nazi masters! Your police and your prisons have taught us anew the meaning of Liberty. The imbecile petty tyrants who represent you throughout the country have taught us anew the virtue of Equality. As to Fraternity—we have indeed found it once more, but against you and against your masters, in the faith which inspires us, in the immense enthusiasm which burns within us and which, on the approaching day of victory, will break out in an irresistible wave which will sweep you away for ever. . . . After this total victory, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, those common banners of the Allied leaders, under the auspices of the Atlantic Charter and of the Declaration made in our name by our leader in war, de Gaulle, will float once more in their pristine purity.

But who are "we"?

"We" are, in the first place, the organised forces of labour. From the outset (November 1940), the leaders of French Syndicalism (C.G.T.—Confédération Générale du Travail, and C.F.T.C.—Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens) issued a comprehensive joint statement of principles affirming their belief in free syndicalism, in social and political Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, rejecting Vichy, capitalism, and racialism, and proclaiming their determination to recover national independence. Their organs of expression are, principally, the clandestine papers *Libération*, *Le Populaire*, *La Voix du Nord*. They have issued many other joint manifestos, they have organised help for the unemployed, they have organised resistance in the factories and resistance to the sending of workers to Germany, they have opposed the anti-Semitic measures, they have helped to organise such national manifestations as those of May 1st and July 14th. Their over-ruling preoccupation is national unity—not an *ad hoc* unity, but one based on fundamental agreement about principles; this is essential to-day in preparation for the battle of liberation; it will be even more essential after the defeat of the Germans, for if civil war is to be added to all the other ills of the French people—then there is little hope, in the near future, of establishing democracy.

"We" are, secondly, the political groupings: Democrats, Popular Democrats, Socialists, Christian Socialists. Communists—whose name is used by Vichy to designate almost anyone who resists—participate in, but they do not lead the movements of resistance; for the simple reason that the principles of justice, liberty, honour which to-day inspire French resistance are not principles of materialism. In this connection I must quote (in French) from the September number of the *Père Duchesne*—perhaps the most violent of the resistance papers:

> Et le peuple qui a faim, le peuple maigre et pâle, il pense pourtant mieux que . . . le préfet, que patron, que Monsieur le Ministre. Il a le temps, malgré sa peine, de penser à la justice. C'est toujours lui d'abord qui se dresse contre la honte avant d'offrir sa peau pour que ça change. . . . Nous qui n'avons rien à défendre, nous défendons tout. Tandis que les traîtres ouvrent la France aux ennemis, nous ouvrons nous pauvres foyers aux traqués, aux militants et aux victimes. . . . C'est tout le peuple de France désormais, canailles, que vous devez poursuivre! Tout est complice dans la vraie France contre l'esclavage et la honte. . . .

"We", again, are all the groups of "men in the street" organised round the resistance papers. I have heard it alleged that these papers are fabricated abroad. The charge is beneath contempt; I only wonder how it would sound in the ears of that friend of mine whom the carelessness of a concierge betrayed to the police in the act of receiving some cast type from the printers—he went to prison—or of those men with whom I used to work all night, casting, composing, correcting. . . . The papers have an enormous circulation: *Libération*, for instance, prints over 60,000 fortnightly in the ex-"occupied" zone and 10,000 weekly in the occupied zone; *Combat* prints 68,000 fortnightly; *Franc-Tireur* prints 15,000 monthly, and so on. Each paper, of course, passes through innumerable hands.

"We", again, are the Christian groups which, more than any others, are outraged by the hypocritical clericalism of Vichy and of certain of their respective dignitaries: the *Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien*, in which Catholics and Protestants co-operate, have a circulation of about 18,000 at irregular intervals.

The focal-point of this massive national unity is, without any doubt, General de Gaulle. But it would not have sufficed in order to rally the workers, that a soldier, however honourable, should have kept France in the war. They were entitled to guarantees as to social reforms. Such guarantees were officially given by General de Gaulle in his declaration of the war-aims of the French people, published in each of the principal resistance papers in June and July of this year.

And it has the additional guarantee of M. André Philip, the Christian Socialist deputy, who is Commissioner for the Interior and for Labour in the French National Committee.

It would be a mistake to think that the people of France have the slightest intention of supporting leaders other than those whom they have freely chosen. The clandestine *Le Populaire* in its Manifesto in June 1942, wrote:

> In France all action for Socialism is subordinate to the liberation of the territory, and if it is fitting to rally men to an activity directed to the ultimate creation of a new régime, it is equally fitting to rally them now to the immediate struggle for national independence. For us, General de Gaulle is the natural and necessary symbol of resistance and of liberation. Whatever hopes certain of the bourgeoisie place in him, we do not believe that the working class has anything to fear from him.

At the other end of the political picture we find a movement like that of *Combat*, which in its first Manifesto (December 1941) showed a distinctly nationalistic and somewhat isolationist line, declaring itself independent of "Gaullisme", "Anglophilism" and the rest. In March 1942 it wrote that whereas the enemies of France support Vichy, her Allies—Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and the other United Nations "recognise" de Gaulle. To-day this "rightist" Movement demands the Fourth Republic, a radical, spiritual, social, political revolution, and concludes: ". . . we call you to fight for the liberation of our territory, for liberation from dictatorship, for economic and spiritual liberation. Come to *Combat* you who, from Dunkerque to Bayonne, from Brest to Nice, in the Empire, fight for France. With General de Gaulle and the Fighting French Forces, at the side of the United Nations, we shall win the war, we shall overthrow Fascism. Afterwards, we shall rebuild France." (September 1942.)

In conclusion I shall say that there is as little illusion, in my country, concerning the possibilities of "collaboration" with Fascists of French nationality as there is with Fascists of any other countries. Hence the self-evident reaction to the Darlan affair. For in France we have thought deeply enough, and suffered deeply enough, the problems of this war not to realise that it is an international civil war, and therefore not to allow any apparent—and usually very questionable—expediency to blind us to the real issue. Our opposition, in France, to all the puppets of Hitler, whether in Vichy or in Paris, whether to Darlan or to Doriot, cannot change because these gentlemen have suddenly elected to save their skins at the expense of their erstwhile Allies. Our war-aims are not negative: they are not simply to drive out the invader. They are in the real sense revolutionary: our aim is freedom not in the abstract but in the concrete; and our first step towards it is by freely uniting, for the liberation of our territories, under the leadership of a man whom all those who follow have chosen freely.

L. MORANDAT

A LONDON DIARY

I FOUND myself in a bus some miles from Glasgow on a singularly black and filthy night. Should I be in time to get the night train to London? From the other side of the bus a man who looked in the half-light like an officer in the Merchant Marine said that he thought I should. He believed that the train went from St. Enoch's Station about the time we should arrive. Did we arrive near? Yes, we stopped outside it. Hope swelled within my breast. An American soldier who had been cuddling a girl in front of me got up and left, after kissing her with a violence that was certainly meant to be business-like. "Fast worker, that," said the boy next to me, whom I thought to be about sixteen. We fell to talking and I was soon engrossed in a story that had nothing of swank or myth about it. He had recently done five trips to the Mediterranean, and been torpedoed four times. He said it was hell being in an open boat; you could not get a wink of sleep; you just lay there and strained your eyes for a ship. Glasgow, which to me seemed revoltingly wet and cheerless, obviously struck him with the warm welcome of home comfort. Then we reached St. Enoch's and I found myself running through the streets in the pitch dark carrying bags and surrounded by the encouraging voices of several sailors. When we had gone some way I asked if we were going to the right place. Yes, we were going to the Central Station. "But I thought the train went from St. Enoch's?" No, they declared, the train goes from the Central Station. We arrived to find an empty platform. My kindly guides left me standing where a train had indeed left half an hour before. They pointed to the place where there should have been a train; they were very nice about it. We said good-night. I stood in the middle of the empty station in Glasgow and cried in a loud voice, "Damn, damn, damn!"

* * *

Unless you've got to read or work it is always a mistake to travel first-class nowadays; you sit silent and stare at the polished boots of an officer who reads *Punch* until he falls asleep. In the crowded third-class carriage in which I travelled down next day from Glasgow I heard enough good tales to provide the basis for a row of Conrad novels. There was the soldier who had fought in France and had been rescued at Dunkirk. He started talking about what the Navy had done for him and then I elicited from the shy man opposite that he had been one of the sailors on a small boat who had gone backwards and forwards continuously for forty-eight hours taking people off from Dunkirk. Had the one picked the other up? They discussed the miracle of the smooth sea, compared notes about how much they had been bombed, and found that the particular ship had not been just the kind in which the sailor had crossed the Channel. Opposite me was a girl in the Waafs, who cried secretly for the first part of the journey after saying good-bye to her lover. She cheered up as everybody got talking. The man sitting next to me, who had not said much because he was fast asleep, woke up and joined in. It was eighteen months since he had been home. He had under the seat a bag full of gifts for his wife. Yes, he had had to pay duty on them like everyone else, but they were well worth it. He had been lucky—only torpedoed once. I remarked that no one seemed to me to have a tougher deal than seamen and to get so little recognition for it. He said that when he was home in ordinary clothes some silly bitch was sure to come up and ask him why he wasn't in uniform. He was glad to be back now, the more because he had been on a tanker. If people who use petrol, he said, knew what it was like to be on a tanker, how often Jerry makes a dead set for them, and how small the chances are of anyone getting rescued when tankers are hit, they wouldn't use much petrol. No, his wife didn't know he was coming; he had thought of sending a telegram, but hadn't; he'd just turn up suddenly. He was very eager but quite patient. I thought that you learn patience on convoys in wartime anyway, and I wondered why I had been cross when I missed my train the night before.

* * *

Such conversations in the train are of immense value in the war; they began in 1940 and belong to the new, less stereotyped England that is, I believe, growing. But one has to be careful! A friend of mine who had a less exciting conversation with a soldier last week-end in a southern county tells me of its odd sequel. He spent twenty minutes waiting on a station platform in conversation—or in an attempt at conversation—with an officer from the Dominions. He says "the officer was difficult to talk to, and I put this down to taciturnity. When he happened to mention the Beaver Club I asked him where the Beaver Club was, since I am always being stopped by soldiers in London asking the way. He said, 'I shan't tell you.' I thought he must be joking. We exchanged a few words about the countryside where I was travelling, about Brighton, English train services and the Canadian Pacific Railway. All this was pretty hard going on my part, and then the officer, referring back to the question about the Beaver Club, said: 'I thought a few minutes ago I ought to have asked you for your identity card.' It seemed to me an odd kind of joke, but I still couldn't believe he was serious. We got into the train without much more to say to one another; I got out at my station, he went on to his; and after relating this encounter to the people I was staying with, I forgot about it. Three days later the village policeman called and asked to see me. Had I travelled by the such-and-such train on such-and-such a day? Yes. Had I talked to a Dominions officer? Yes. It appeared that the officer had reported the matter to the Army Intelligence, and they had handed it on to the police. By showing my identity card and other papers to the policeman I managed to convince him that I wasn't a spy, and the incident closed in smiles." My friend added that he made no complaint about this little episode; it revealed, he said, a stupidity which, if common, would make friendly relations with anyone very difficult indeed. "I could have understood if the date had been 1940 and not 1942. But if one can't ask where the Beaver Club is without rousing suspicions, conversation becomes next to impossible. Most Dominion soldiers I have met, by the way, go to the opposite extreme and pour out information without being asked for it. I suppose it is better in the end for all of us to be mum as oysters than talkative as jays."

* * *

Three escapes from prison is the highest number of which any of my own acquaintances boast. One of them, a German sailor, slipped out of Dachau, fought in Spain, then got out of the French camp at Argeles and finally escaped from internment in Canada by rowing across the St. Lawrence. The other day I heard Pierre Bloch tell his story. He was one of the most genuine of the French Socialist deputies in the distant days of peace. As a prisoner of war he spent five months in a German camp before he escaped—a quite tolerable experience. Then in his own former constituency, the Dordogne, he set himself to rebuild underground its old Socialist party. The rank and file he found very much stauncher than most of the Deputies had been and eager for resistance. The embarrassing thing was that some of his old opponents of the Extreme Right were just as keen. He was allowed to visit Léon Blum in prison and found that he has renewed his youth. Captive though he is, he is confident, optimistic and combative. Soon after this, he was himself imprisoned under Admiral Darlan, who treated him much worse than the enemy had done. He lay in a prison where felons and politicals were packed together in a promiscuous crowd. He had to lie on the floor devoured by vermin and the food was so disgusting and so insufficient that some prisoners died, literally of starvation. Thanks to parcels from friends, he survived. Appeals from his friends to Darlan failed to move that stony heart. It was Laval who proved himself a good-natured ruffian. Thanks to him he enjoyed a more tolerable confinement and then escaped. His third prison was in Spain. It was packed with Republicans. From time to time some of them were shot, but while they lived they enjoyed all the amenities of an ideal prison with a garden, a canteen and a cinema. This is, I think, the first good word I have ever heard said for Franco by anyone who knew anything about it. M. Bloch's impressions of Spain were inevitably scanty, but they were sharp. He believed that about 1,500,000 Republicans are still in camps or gaols. Those he met were cheerful and confident, for they assumed, in their innocence, that Franco could not survive a victory of the United Nations. Outside this model prison the general picture was of semi-starvation and a sense even among Franco's partisans that his regime is going down in failure.

* * *

The New York taxi-driver hooted and hooted. The policeman, talking to someone in another car, obstructed his way. At last he moved and, sweeping triumphantly by, the taxi-driver said to his fare: "That's what I like about the United States. If you hoot even a cop must move out of your way."

To cap this story of rugged individualism, I heard another from a friend who had asked his taxi-driver to wait for a couple of minutes in a main street. He came back almost immediately, but the taxi had gone. Then he saw the driver a hundred yards or more down the street waving frantically to him. "That lousy bum of a cop," said the driver as he got in again, "wouldn't let me stand there even though I told him you were only going to be a couple of minutes. *That's why France fell.*"

* * *

I am told on the most reliable information that a shop in Shrewsbury is now selling busts of famous people, price 15s. each. So far only three have appeared. My informant declares that they are Winston Churchill, Lenin and Joad, and that the best seller is Joad.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to A. H. H. Guilbride.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W C.1.

Mr. Coates played the march over to me at his new home in West End. It is a bumptious, whistlable, optimistic tune with a powerful lilt like a tank singing.—*Daily Express.*

Kingston-on-Thames Youth Council have refused to let the film "In Which We Serve" be seen at a Youth Parade—because there is swearing in it.—*Daily Mail.*

Widow (40), cultured, attractive, desires meet business or professional gentleman, view companionship, dancing, cinemas, mutual Christian interests; highest integrity—Write 1148 Echo, Cheltenham.—*Gloucestershire Echo.*

SO HELP ME DARLAN

How doth the Vichy double b——
Improve the eisenhower?
He settles on the Allied cause
And turns the whole lot sour.

G. L. S.

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.
POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canda, 1d.
ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

THE COLOURED FOLK OF CARDIFF—A CHALLENGE TO RECONSTRUCTION*

"THERE is no Colour Bar in Cardiff," two public servants with whom I had been discussing the matter told me. As I had already been round to eleven hotels and boarding houses, and learned that seven of them, one doubtful, did not accept coloured guests ("We are only a small place catering for commercials; it may be all right in a larger house," etc.) the former information was obviously more of sociological than factual value.

Cardiff has probably the largest coloured population of any city in these islands. It is made up mainly of West Indian, West African and Arab seamen and their families. There are no official statistics, but the number of men has been estimated at 3,000; the Moslems (Arabs, Somalis, Indians, Malays and Egyptians) claim some 1,000 children, and there are several hundreds of additional "half-castes," mainly Anglo-Negroid. It is a remarkable community in many ways; not only on account of its diversity (over fifty different nationalities are said to be represented) of language, religion and custom, but for its sheer ability to persist here in spite of every possible kind of adversity. Shut away and segregated in the narrow and gloomy dockland peninsula of Bute Town about three-quarters of a mile from the city proper in a manner not unreminiscent of a Continental ghetto, these people have weathered over twenty years' intermittent racial persecution, economic discrimination and hardship, and social ostracism and neglect.

Most of the men were brought over here as British subjects by the Government to perform some form of national service, at sea, in the army or in labour battalions, during the last war. Their usefulness came to an end with the close of hostilities. The soldiers were disbanded, and the jobs of those who had helped to carry on the merchant service in time of need were given to demobilised white naval seamen by the patriotic shipowners. The sea was the only possible means of livelihood for the coloured men, and when, in addition, an energetic but inefficient mob of demobbed soldiers and others set itself the task of storming their homes, Sidney Street fashion, there was no longer any ambiguity about the position. Some of the coloured men took the hint, and applied for repatriation. A large number, however, had established family ties, and found departure impossible. Others, who as a result of unemployment were heavily in bondage to the lodging house masters, could not go for equally obvious reasons. In the subsequent years the fortunes of these men and the community they had set up reflect to a large extent the almost unbroken depression in shipping and in South Wales industry in general. Falling freights left the shipowners with the wages bill as their only weapon of competition, and led in turn to an increasing complaint on the part of the unions that Asiatic and "cheap coloured labour" was being substituted for white seamen. The coloured community, as seamen domiciled in this country, could obtain work only on similar terms and conditions as a white sailor, but qua their colour, inevitably perhaps, came in for a share of the growing enmity.

It is not easy to say if the Coloured Alien Seamen's Order of 1925 was the direct outcome of these circumstances. Nominally it required little more than the registration of all *alien* seamen with the police. The greater proportion of the Cardiff men were, of course, of British or "British protected" nationality, and possessed passports and other official documents to prove it. Nevertheless, through the extraordinary zeal of the Cardiff police, acting presumably under a mistaken conception of the Order and in the most unorthodox manner, they were obliged to surrender these proofs and to register as aliens. It appears as if some 1,500 men were affected, but the situation did not become significant until 1935, when the Shipping Assistance Act was passed. Under this the tramp shipowners were handed £2 millions in subsidies in exchange for a number of guarantees to the Government, one of which ensured the employment in their ships of almost completely British crews. In effect it meant the immediate classification of the Cardiff coloured as non-British under the terms of the Act, and automatic exclusion from their sole source of livelihood. The effect was so comprehensive that in one count at the Cardiff Docks, out of some 700 firemen registered as unemployed, nearly 90 per cent. were coloured men. Fortunately the League of Coloured Peoples in London was able to lend substantial aid in rectifying the injustice, and in securing naturalization.

But this last event, and the previous years of unemployment and hardship, were beginning to leave their marks, and apathy, despondency and malnutrition were the natural results. The situation of the younger generation was particularly depressing. Whilst at school white and coloured ("half-caste") children mixed freely and spontaneously, but directly the coloured boy or girl tried to get a job in the world outside the "colour line," prejudice stepped in. The reports of the Cardiff juvenile committees testify to this over and over again—that even when employers were willing, white girls would not accept a coloured girl as a co-worker. Scholarships to the secondary schools were won, but what good were they? They meant an intolerable strain in terms of maintenance on the family income, and at the end of it all a job as an errand boy, or some other blind-alley category if you were lucky. The coloured girl was fortunate if she found any job at all.

Despite its unenviable position the coloured community has held on, despite high rents, overcrowding, tuberculosis (engendered largely in British merchant ships); despite the periodic onslaughts of social hygienists, watch committees and amateur racialists, and despite differential P.A.C. and U.A.B. allowances, based on the theory that because the coloured man is able to effect his household catering more cheaply than a white man, his needs are less (at the same time in fairness to Cardiff it must be added that other ports offered only institutional relief). The community has held on by mutual aid, by mere virtue of necessity, and by a sheer determination not to be ousted from what it conceives to be its rights under British nationality. To-day, at the price of several hundreds of its torpedoed menfolk, the economic difficulties are temporarily, at any rate, surmounted. To-day, under wartime regimentation, even the coloured girls have no difficulty in finding jobs!

But what of the future? The obvious answer, of course, is that it is bound up with the fortunes of the shipping world as a whole. But few of the experts seem very optimistic regarding that industrial Cinderella, and it is clear, and indeed essential, that the younger generations should look elsewhere. The point, however, is where and how—will colour prejudice be any less after the war? It will necessitate also a considerable change of heart within the community as well as outside. Jobs are obtainable in this country, prejudice or no prejudice, but they are gained more easily with a fair standard of education to back the applicant, and up to the present the numbers of coloured children aspiring to the free places the Cardiff secondary schools offer, have been negligible compared even with other working class quarters. The reason for this lack of initiative is obvious. Long years of struggle, hardship and frustration have built up prejudices among some of the parents as strong as any encountered outside, and the younger generation, if less militant in their attitudes, are even more apathetic. There is, therefore, at least one fundamental necessity which may well prove the key to the whole problem—the creation of a solid, unified and dynamic spirit of communal responsibility and initiative. Illiteracy and sectarianism do not make it an easy undertaking. Nevertheless, a significant movement to that end already exists among the Negro section. It requires guidance and material reinforcement. The latter might be offered in the form of a "community hall" and buildings suitably and reasonably equipped for the purpose of general social and cultural activities, which can hardly be expected to thrive in the absence of such amenities. The establishment would also provide a base for extra-school and educational effort; only an exceptional child can study in a house occupied by two and sometimes three separate families and compete successfully with the children of middle-class parents. Funds will also be needed to maintain some of the needy scholars who would otherwise have to earn their own keep. Hardly less necessary is the launching in the City itself of a constructive policy of education on the colour problem through the media of schools, churches, and even on the public platform. In the latter respect, as well as in the social resuscitation of the community, it is evident that eminent coloured residents in this country could be invaluable. There is no lack of well-wishers in the city, but not a few of them, like the coloured community, have also become apathetic and sceptical during the long years of mutual misunderstanding and inertia. In all these proposals skilled attention and financial aid alike are implicit. The Colonial Office and the British Council are in process of setting up a hostel for the men, and a mosque for the Moslem members. It is a useful start, for anything which aids in rectifying the dearth of social and recreational amenities in the district (there is not even a cinema nearer than the city and nothing in the nature of football pitches, etc.) is to be welcomed. But it would be a great mistake to assume that anything short of radical and comprehensive treatment will effect more than a minor alleviation. There is an excellent opportunity here for the recently appointed Colonial Office Advisory Committee. Indeed, the task as a whole, and the material, offer in a microcosm an admirable test of our reconstructive abilities. It is an opportunity which should not be neglected, if only to ensure that the long promised new era of Anglo-Colonial relations does not contain any "fossil records" of the past.

K. L. LITTLE

*This article summarises the results of a social survey carried out recently in Cardiff: the material is published *in extenso* in the Sociological Review, Vol. XXXIV, 1942.

NO FLIES

"It is not surprising that the (Darlan) situation should be regarded here with dismay as well as disgust . . . it has disheartened the lesser Allies who ask if Quislings everywhere are to be accorded most-favoured-traitor treatment."—*Spectator.*

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly,
"In the common cause of freedom I can use a new ally,
The way into my parlour is up a private stair,
And we'll not be interrupted while we settle our affair."

So Vichy's boneless wonder with Eisenhower conferred
In a snug Algerian parlour where they were not overheard,
And the spider and the fly agreed upon a joint design
And both affixed their signatures upon the dotted line.

So the Austrian ex-archduke sought out Secretary Hull,
For a war is not the moment for a diplomatic lull,
And Foreign Office parlours made their preparations too
When Hungarians and Slovaks asked a quiet interview.

When diplomatic spiders span their snares of ancient shape
According to the oft-told tale, the fly could not escape,

The unsuspecting visitor was always overpowered,
There were no flies on the spider and the insect was devoured.

But the quisling fly is unexcelled at skirting round the web
While the giant spider's *savoir faire* has reached its lowest ebb,
For, far from being swallowed in the spider's artful grip,
The fly is seen departing with a junior spidership.

So United Nation spinners give concern to small Allies,
Though their parlours are wide open and they simply crawl with flies.
Each fly may be the tenant of a comfortable niche—
There are flies and there are spiders—but God knows which is which.

SAGITTARIUS

POCKETS AND BUTTONS

THE best-dressed of my friends came to see me on Sunday, and I thought I had never seen him looking more like the twentieth century inheritor of the mantle of Count D'Orsay. To my surprise he told me that the new suit he was wearing was of the kind known as "austerity" or "utility". There were no buttons—those showy superfluities of an over-rich civilisation—at the wrists of his sleeves. His waistcoat was several inches too tight round the chest, he said, and several inches too wide round the waist, and he confessed that he had tucked up the lining at the back with a safety-pin to adjust matters. As for the trousers, they were built round the waist to accommodate, not my friend's graceful figure, but a Falstaff. What my friend complained of most, however, was not the absence of sleeve-buttons or faults of measurement, but that he had been denied a handkerchief-pocket and that for the first time in his life he had had a hip-pocket thrust on him—to his sensitive taste, a grave indignity.

Had he not made these revelations, I should have continued to regard him as the best-dressed man in the South of England. Some of us go to Savile Row, and within a month we look as though we had bought our clothes when blindfolded from a secondhand dealer in misfits. My friend, on the other hand, makes any suit he wears look as if it had arrived from Savile Row the day before. I do not mean to suggest that in times of peace he frequents any but the best tailors; but he is a man who gives distinction to clothes by wearing them; and, in being perfectly dressed, he owes even more to his native genius than to his tailor. He certainly would have filled with envy any would-be dandy who had seen with what exquisite grace he wore that austerity suit—safety-pin and all.

At the same time, to a man accustomed to the good things of life, that dearth of pockets must have been distressing. Multiplicity of pockets has been one of the phenomena of modern progress: you can always measure social advancement by an increasing indulgence in the unnecessary. We do not call men civilised till they desire more and more unnecessary things to eat and drink, and more and more unnecessary things to wear. The history of the pocket—and most pockets are unnecessary—would be the history in miniature of modern civilisation. In no previous age, I am sure, were the pockets in men's clothes so numerous as they have become in the present wonderful century. I have myself twelve pockets in my jacket, waistcoat and trousers; and, when I wear an overcoat, I carry seventeen pockets about with me. It is hard to imagine that men's clothes will ever contain a greater number of pockets than now. We might, of course, have two hip-pockets instead of one, and have other pockets let in at our knees and the bottoms of our trousers. But I fancy that, in their invention of extra pockets, the tailors have reached all but the limit.

One of the odd things in the history of pockets is that no sooner are men given a pocket for an apparently useful purpose than they begin to think out ways of not using it for its proper end, treating it as a purely ornamental part of the costume. Thus, some centuries ago, a utilitarian tailor invented a watch-pocket: there were watch pockets of a kind, we are told, in the Forest of Arden. Then in our own time came the wrist-watch, making the watch-pocket superfluous for a large part of the population. But did the tailors cease to make watch-pockets in waistcoats on that account? On the contrary, they went on making watch-pockets with undiminished ardour, and no man would have felt fully-dressed without them. Consider too, the handkerchief-pocket. To most of us in the Victorian era this seemed to be the most indispensable of all pockets. Yet even here the ingenuity of man set to work and for a time made the handkerchief-pocket superfluous by devising a fashion according to which it was the correct thing to carry the handkerchief in the cuff and to leave the pocket created for it empty.

I doubt whether there is a single pocket in the costume of men which the malice of fashion has not at one time or another tried to make useless. How many school-masters and parents have denounced the proper use of trouser pockets—which is to slouch along with the hands in them. "It is rank bad manners," says one schoolmaster of the habit of walking with the hands in the pockets. A peer has attacked the habit as "dangerous," because it produces round shoulders. If trouser-pockets are so dangerous, however, why make them at all? At least why make two of them? One pocket may serve a purpose as a receptacle for small change, but few schoolboys have enough small change to fill two pockets. Fashion, however, insists on two pockets, however unnecessary, and mainly because they are unnecessary.

Even the side pockets in the jacket one is discouraged from using. I have always taken for granted that pockets are places to put things into, and have stuffed my pockets with anything that would go into them—books, newspapers, letters, pipes, pouches, cigarettes, matchboxes and so forth. I once found eleven boxes of matches in the pockets of a suit I was wearing. Yet even as a boy I was discouraged from making this, as it seems to me, natural use of my pockets. I was told that, if you put things into your pockets, you spoilt the shape of your suit. This seems to me as ridiculous as it would be to say that, if you put potatoes into a sack, you spoil the shape of the sack. My inside breast-pocket, stuffed with unanswered letters, may make a bulge that suggests malformation; but I dress for use, not for beauty; and my figure is nothing to boast of at the best of times. In any case, to say that you spoil a suit by putting things in the pockets seems to me as unreasonable as to say that you spoil a wardrobe by putting clothes on the pegs, or that you spoil a chest of drawers by filling them with shirts and handkerchiefs.

I am, I confess, a devotee of pockets. When I go to my tailor and he asks me what pockets I want, I tell him all of them. I have none of my friend's prejudice against the hip-pocket: I have often found a pound-note there that I thought I had lost. If you have enough pockets, you seldom lose anything. Look through the debris in one pocket after another, and everything ultimately turns up—the fountain pen, the cheque, the railway-ticket, the spectacles, the diary for the year before last, the cough pastilles. With all one's seventeen pockets stuffed, one becomes a kind of walking Woolworth.

As for the buttons men wear, many of these, too, are preserved as mere ornaments. At present I have four buttons on each sleeve, and none of them seems to serve any purpose except to prove that we live in a spendthrift society. My jacket, which is double-breasted, has seven other buttons, two of them not even provided with button-holes. In recent years, the lowest of the six waistcoat buttons has become superfluous in the best circles. If the luxurious days of peace had lasted, I cannot help thinking that one waistcoat button after another would have been left undone in obedience to changing whims of fashion, and that ultimately the waistcoat would have been worn unfastened down the entire front—an innovation which I think, given the right shirt and tie, would make for picturesqueness. But, even if this had taken place, the tailors would have gone on sewing on six buttons and producing six buttonholes as evidence that right-thinking men care nothing for economy. The number of buttons that I carry on my clothes, apart from the shirt and pants, at present, before I have put on my overcoat, is thirty-two, and a large proportion of them are almost as useless as a coster's pearlies. They give a cachet to the wearer, however, like his equally useless tie; and I must confess that, with no buttons on his sleeve, my friend—at a second glance—looked rather naked.

Why buttons should still be regarded as a decorative part of the masculine costume is not easy to understand. There is something to be said for the metal buttons of the soldier and the naval officer as aids to vanity. They have the air of having been left over from an age of gold and are symbols of boastfulness like a Red Indian's feathers. Alan Breck seems doubly vainglorious in the peacock tradition when we associate him with his silver buttons. The English word "bravery" denotes finery as well as courage: and there is much to be said for a good man's going about in a bravery of buttons. These modern buttons that we civilians wear, however—made of bone or composition or whatever it may be—have no touch of the brave or the magnificent about them. They are no more distinguished than so many pins, and look as though they were meant not to be noticed. At best, they have no virtue but utility; and millions of buttons that are worn to-day are not even useful. It may be argued that even these last have the virtue of being superfluous, and, as I have already admitted that love of the superfluous is a mark of civilisation, I cannot deny that there is a case to be made out even for the modern sleeve-button. How commonplace it is, yet how inquisitely unnecessary! I shall certainly feel a little cold and inhuman when I put on my first utility suit.

Y.Y.

ON THE EXECUTIONS IN POLAND

SUCH is the waking Polish night:
Behind the bars, the visionary scream
Of the murdered moment, blinds our sight
With the drama of a naked dream.

From a womb of crimes is reborn innocence:
The strangled lovers, women, children, the old.
Out of our age of pavements and indifference
We see such spectral truths unfold!

The violent feeding on the weak, afar
Where no help comes, we witness on a screen
Burning brilliant through black war.
Our hearts know all the seen and the unseen

Sobbing. Their lament is our own.
The iron transportable malignance
Of the dragon now so fully grown
Lurched from our own days of indifference.

The young with whips, those passing with eyes closed
On the other side of the day's quiet crime,
And the human heart with a fence of fangs enclosed—
Such was the triptych of our time.

The antique tragedy where fate pursues
The weak of heart, shoots from the jaws of earth.
Andromeda waits enchained for Perseus
To release her nakedness to a new birth.

STEPHEN SPENDER

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Mr. Raymond Mortimer has done well in providing a preface to the catalogue of paintings by Fred Uhlman at the Leicester Galleries; for, as a German barrister and refugee, he needs a word of introduction, though as an artist he does not. "He is entirely self-taught," we are told; but there is nothing amateurish about his work, which is naif only in its occasional "conceptualism"—that is to say, like a child, sometimes he will place and portray figures and objects as he thinks them rather than as he sees them. This habit leads often to happy results, and once or twice (as in No. 12 *Snow Scene*) has led to a remarkable composition. Assuredly Mr. Mortimer is right in detecting an affinity with Klee: indeed, the pervasive charm of these pictures comes of a Klee-like quality, reminiscent of fine, worn textiles rather than of oil-painting. By comparison it is Julian Trevelyan's sketches at Lefevre which appear amateurish. This appearance, however, is accidental. They happen to have been made in a hurry with such materials as came to hand in a remote place, and they are as taking and tasteful as works by this artist are apt to be. They suggest a delightful ballet; indeed, many of them could serve as sets and choreographic indications as they stand. That the pictures in the next room by Hans Feibusch should be unsatisfactory is not surprising, since his talent can hardly find room to assert itself in a gallery. He needs a hoarding; and it is to be regretted for his sake and ours that Shell-Mex and the Underground are no longer in the market. This is not an insult: a poster can be a genuine work of art. At the Leger Gallery are a few pictures by Buhler, a young painter of considerable promise. Presumably at the moment his energies are devoted to some sort of war work, for his latest pictures are not his best. *Cowshed* (*No.* 33), which is his best, seems to have been painted some time ago. Apparently he is feeling his way towards combinations of stronger colours, and so far the results of his experiment are not quite successful. Here, also, are a quantity of gay little panels by Dunlop which will certainly please his admirers. At the Redfern is an important collection of pictures by Edward Burra. Burra is a disconcertingly uneven artist, so not unnaturally the quality of his talent is still in dispute; but certainly his work deserves to be known, and Dr. Rothenstein does well in acquiring examples for the Tate. Only, *μηδὲν ἄγαν*—moderation in all things. It would be a pity if, in his enthusiasm for this interesting but uncertain artist, the director were to forget that there are others, equals and superiors, alive and at work, and inadequately represented in our national collection. Clive Bell

THE MOVIES

"The Major and the Minor," at the Plaza

After no films to tickle the fancy for weeks, here is an enchanting one. The only unattractive thing about it is the rather slick title. Ginger Rogers has found yet another role and—unless I am mistaken—another director, Billy Wilder, of whom we should hear much in the future. He has a touch. Good idea, good story, good dialogue, everything in its place—and a bit more! We begin with Miss Rogers going on her rounds to shampoo a client; the client is Robert Benchley, middle-aged and amorous; no beginning could be funnier. But many films, after a Benchley kick-off, have dwindled away. This one drops Benchley (until a delightful reappearance near the end) and goes its own sweet way. Miss Rogers, fed up with New York, wants to get back to her home town, but the fares have gone up and her savings won't run to a ticket, so she disappears into the ladies' cloak-room, to emerge a few moments later as a schoolgirl of twelve. Her adventures on the half-ticket lead to some equivocal and disarming situations. A handsome young major (Ray Milland) with an empty lower berth but a fiancée meeting him at the other end, uncles her into the safety of the Wallace Military Academy. The three days at the Academy, where three hundred cadets fall in love with her, soar into the lightest of fantasies, in which Miss Rogers, as a budding Zuleika Dobson, and the etiquette of the Academy play equally important parts. It is on the last evening, with everyone gathered for the Ball, that Benchley reappears and suffers agony trying to remember where he has seen this precocious schoolgirl before. She has to escape and find her way home in a hurry. The handsome major, more warmly and uneasily avuncular than ever, of course, follows, but there is a further surprise in store: Miss Rogers changes from pigtails to white-streaked hair and spectacles and passes herself off as her mother. This subtly enjoyable and funny film ripples from beginning to end like streamers in the breeze, and the sexual equivocations are beautifully managed. It's a film that no doubt sails under a "U" certificate, while touching extremes of sexual sophistication.

William Whitebait

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The House by the Stable" and "The Marvellous History of Young Bernard" at the Grand Theatre, Croydon

"It isn't what everyone likes!" said the programme girl apologetically, and the blank plush tiers dismally bore her out. It is understandable that a nativity play should "draw" only the religious or the dramatically curious, but the history of Young Bernard is a fine lively morality which deserves a larger audience. It has an earthy humour, sharply drawn characters, poetry—qualities that should fill a theatre as steadily as Mr. Bridie's *Tobias*, for example. The production by the Oxford Pilgrim Players (in association with C.E.M.A.) is direct and easy, if a little slow, and the costumes are admirable, simple and rich, grouping well. Mr. Milo Sperber's Fool dominates the play. He is in turn chorus, compère and property man; his fooling is pointed and worldly, and in the mock-betrothal scene he expands into the broadest comedy. Mr. Donald Houston has an upstanding presence and a good voice; his Bernard is moving and un-mannered, though perhaps too rigid for so young a saint. Mr. Gordon Davies is outstanding in the small part of the Prior, and the rest of the cast contribute the good team acting which makes mention difficult. By contrast, Mr. Charles Williams' nativity seems boneless and faked, a thing so far from its tradition as to have lost validity. Mr. John V. Trevor and Miss Pamela Alan make a brave show in the parts of Man and Pride, but it is never more than a show, uneasily stagey. Miss Ruth Spalding's straightforward Mary, however, does much to retrieve the last five minutes of the play.

"Holy Isle," at the Arts Theatre Club

James Bridie is a most uneven playwright, and this certainly does not rank with his best work. It is fairest to reckon it as a charade, when it becomes a pleasant and frequently witty entertainment. What happens when sophistication reaches an idyllic and unspoilt community—in this case a crew of Orcadians from the court of King Lot; an idealist reformer, cancelled out by a monk, a business man, and Lot's Queen, the enchantress Morgause, bent upon mischief and the yellow-headed idealist? Just the general degeneration you would expect, commented by "She," the guardian of the Island's innocence. There is some very good funning, when the business-man introduces industry, and the island lovers offer to explain the facts of life to the monk: and the plot takes an unexpected turn when the intruders "go native." Bridie has the temerity to make his island Tir n'an Og, but as, mercifully, he is not Barrie, he handles the fantasy lightly. Miss Margaretta Scott looks Morgause to the life, for she has the Celtic beauty, marred by awkward movement. But her acting, whether in seduction or fury, is never convincing or natural. "She," the other protagonist, is played by Miss Vivienne Bennett, as an astringent school-marm, not quite impressive enough, but admirably neat. Of the rest of the cast, Kwoo (or is it Qua?—anyhow the bald-headed member of the island Brains Trust) is well acted by A. Bromley Davenport.

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Correspondence

THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

Sir,—The Beveridge Report assumes that "a comprehensive national health service will ensure that for every citizen there is available whatever medical treatment he requires, in whatever form he requires it," and this is only reasonable, for without it true social security would be impossible.

To provide this a national medical service is essential. Such a service should be administered by popularly elected local authorities, and should operate in units closely in touch with the people. The home doctors should work from Health Centres, and they should be linked to a single unified hospital system, from which specialists can serve the adjacent district.

All the doctors of the service must be responsible for the maintenance of health and prevention of disease as well as the cure of individual patients. For this they must be full-time officers.

Merely to extend the panel to all and sundry would be the greatest possible disaster. Panel practices are freely bought and sold, and any doctor with a minimum qualification who possesses the necessary capital or can borrow it from a moneylender can buy one, and, provided he has an agreeable personality, can usually retain or increase it, for few people can estimate the quality of their doctor's services.

To extend the panel so that the principal medical service for 90 per cent. to 100 per cent. of the population (paid for to a large extent by public funds) is provided by appointments and sold to the highest bidder should surely be impossible.

Somerville Hastings, L.C.C., F.R.C.S.
President,
Socialist Medical Association.

Sir,—Mr. P. J. Walkley in his letter on the Beveridge Report makes some statements which appear to be contradictory and draws a conclusion which, if it is correct, confronts us with a serious problem.

He admits that the Report constitutes a "crumb of reform," having previously stated that "stripped of its glamour it stands naked as an attempt to perpetuate class rule at the expense of the ruled," and "there is no security under class rule." Surely, to be logical and allowing for mixed metaphors, the Report, if it possessed even one crumb of reform was entitled to at least one garment to prevent complete nakedness. Mr. Walkley says that "this report extracts such unanimous support from the ruling classes that the

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In a brief foreword Mr. Cole says: "This pamphlet is meant to explain the Beveridge Report to those who want its main proposals stated briefly and in unofficial language. It is an explanation, and not a criticism of the Report; for, though there are points at which the proposals are open to criticism, they are to my mind all of secondary importance. The essential thing, for the time being, is to get the Report understood and accepted as a whole, in principle, both by public opinion and by the Government, and to get quickly into being the administrative machinery needed for carrying it into effect. I have written this pamphlet in the hope that it may help to get the Report quickly understood among the public, and may contribute to that general expression of public demand for its acceptance which is most likely to be effective in getting it implemented promptly by legislation. No more important social document has been issued for a generation; and it is now for the public to see to it that Sir William Beveridge's notable contribution to reconstruction policy is neither rejected nor pushed aside."

NOTE: Although announced for publication on December 18 this pamphlet may not be fully available until a few days later.

10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1

class-conscious worker instinctively knows that it is directed against him." But suppose the "ruling class" had opposed the Report, what then? Presumably the workers' reason would have brought them to a similar conclusion. So that whatever the "rulers" attitude is, the "workers" either by instinct or reason know that it must be a wrong one. Therefore, the ruling class must always be resisted by the workers, in other words, war must always exist between them whether it be physical or political.

But what many of us would like to know is, who exactly are the Ruling Classes and who the Class-Conscious Workers? Mr. Kingsley Martin also divides us into two groups, using the labels "Established Ruling Classes" and "Common People." But since in democracies, at any rate, many of the Common People enter the Ruling Class and others of the Ruling Class return to the ranks of the Commoners, how is this attitude of enmity and opposition to be maintained? Just as there must be a physiological moment when a good egg becomes a bad egg, there is a psychological one when the Worker becomes Ruler and vice versa, and each automatically supports the interests of the class to which he has formerly been opposed. Some enlightenment on this point would be very helpful to those of us who are not (yet) among the Rulers but are not as conscious of their class-consciousness as perhaps they ought to be.

Springdale Road, D. M. KERR
Broadstone, Dorset.

FLATS OR HOUSES

SIR,—It might be of interest to Mr. Silkin and some others of your readers to know of the results of a recent mass-observation survey into present-day housing conditions, to be published shortly as Change No. 4 by the Advertising Service Guild.

Inquiries among the inhabitants of two modern blocks of flats in London—widely regarded as model dwellings—elicited the information that seventy-nine per cent. liked their home, a figure only exceeded in the case of three L.C.C. housing estates (80 per cent.). Yet when these flat dwellers were asked what sort of home they would prefer if they had a completely free choice, only twenty-eight per cent. stated they wanted to live in a flat; sixty per cent. opted for a small house, five per cent. for a bungalow, the rest making miscellaneous suggestions. This clearly indicates that though people were on the whole satisfied with the individual design of their flat and could find little fault with it, the majority lived in flats only in default of some more satisfactory form of housing.

MASS-OBSERVATION
82 Ladbroke Road, W.11.

SIR,—In my letter in your issue of November 28th I said that the results obtained from asking a specially selected class of persons whether they preferred to live in a house or a flat were worthless and I gave my reasons. Mr. Whittick's last letter confirms this view. He says 95 per cent. of men and 85 per cent. of women voted for houses. What else could be expected when the question was put by so vehement an advocate of houses and one who is so blind to vital facts. He says that numerous occupants of flats in Vienna have indicated that they would really prefer to live in the small houses on the outskirts of Vienna. Exactly! And that is the choice which more and more the Londoner will be faced with—a flat in the centre or a house on the outskirts. Why did not Mr. Whittick put this fact before the members of the Forces? Incidentally I happen to know that when workers in London were faced with that same choice, 85 per cent. to 90 per cent. preferred a flat. Both he and Mr. Osborn believe that decentralisation of industry and industrial population from urban areas will solve their problem. But while it may be possible to prevent further growth of large towns by controlling the entry of new industry, is it really practical politics forcibly to expel existing industry from these towns? And anyway, how long do Messrs. Whittick and Osborn think it will take by this means to depopulate London sufficiently to permit of the whole of the population living in houses? And what is to be done in the meantime? And why did not Mr. Whittick tell his audience that, anyway, they could not all have houses until industry and population were decentralised?

Both Mr. Whittick and Mr. Osborn recognise that the high cost of land in many urban areas is at present a fatal objection to the erection of houses, but they think that the Uthwatt Report has provided a solution, and that if the report is adopted it would have the effect of decreasing the value of such land. The report does nothing of the kind. If every single recommendation of the Uthwatt Report were adopted the value of urban land would remain largely unaffected.

Finally, if the vast majority of people prefer to live in houses, why is it that the demand for flats of all kinds in London remains so very largely unsatisfied in spite of the enormous number of flats erected in recent years?

House of Commons. LEWIS SILKIN

"BRITAIN IN PICTURES"

SIR,—Some of your readers may possibly have taken the references in the review of October 24th and your correspondence columns of November 14th to mean that the "Britain in Pictures" series is published by or for the British Council, or inspired and subsidised by it in some way. This is not the case. The Council has purchased copies of the books but has treated them exactly as it treats any other books published by any other firm, that is to say, it considers each of them independently on its own merits, with expert advice wherever necessary, to decide its suitability or unsuitability for use in the Council's work.

In fairness to the publishers and the Council, we should be grateful if you would print this letter.

The College, JOHN HAMPDEN, *Director*,
South Leigh, Books and Periodicals
Witney, Oxon. Department, British Council.

THE BRITISH WAY

SIR,—I appreciate Mr. Orwell's review of my Penguin *The British Way in Warfare*. As regards the one aspect he questions, I would point out that the chapter concerned—the first—was specifically historical. I agree that changing conditions compelled a revision of our historic strategy. Indeed, I agreed in advance. For when, with the rise to power of Nazism, the problem of our future strategy became concrete instead of abstract, my opening articles on joining the *Times* early in 1935 concentrated on two main points. One was that, in view of the changed conditions, "the development of collective security is not only a moral ideal but a British interest, from the most practical point of view." The other was that we must think in terms of sea-and-air power; that sea-power alone could no longer suffice in face of the new "menace of shore-based aircraft," which would "multiply" the effect of the submarine menace, itself probably intensified. Since our limited resources made it impossible for us to be adequately strong in every sphere, we ought to be guided by a sense of proportion. This pointed to the necessity of concentrating on the development of our sea-air strength—which obviously meant limiting the scale of our land forces. The effective strength of these could, nevertheless, be developed *qualitatively* by mechanising them.

Where I differ from Mr. Orwell's argument is that I think that the *adaptation* of our historic strategy to changed conditions would have been better than its *abandonment*. The desire to make our strategic policy primarily Continental seemed to me to overlook our inherent limitations—as a small island lying on the edge of a large continent. Our allies have rarely understood this.

I agree that "allies are apt to insist on" our attempting a land effort similar to their own. But a natural desire is not equivalent to a sound design. In defer-

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JONATHAN CAPE

ence to the French we sent 13 infantry divisions to support them in France—and saw these "dunkirked." If we had, instead, sent two or three armoured divisions and a few hundred fighter aircraft we should have gone further to meet France's real need and supplement her chief deficiency—thereby saving her fom the disaster that befell her. All the retrospective evidence has tended to bear out this prospective argument.

A year later we were fortunate to be presented with a new ally, Russia. She was no less insistent on the need for us to "take our share" in the Continental struggle. This was prevented by the limitation, not of our aims, but of our means. And our ally has had to put up with our inability to achieve the impracticable.

It is questionable whether an abandonment of our traditional strategy was made inevitable by an "ideological issue," that had not arisen before. Deep as our antagonism is towards Nazi Germany, it is not so hot as that of our ancestors towards Catholic Spain three centuries ago. Yet it was then that Elizabeth and Burleigh coolly evolved in practice, and Bacon in theory, the characteristic "British Way in Warfare"—suited to our conditions and means. Military, social and economic developments clearly compelled a revision of it. But conformity to Continental theory led us to carry this farther than was wise. It was not a question of limiting, but of distributing our effort—in the way that would be most effective within our means.

On the surface it may seem that, as Mr. Orwell suggests, "Britain has up to date waged the kind of war" outlined in my 1932 survey of our historic strategy. But that is only due to natural causes—to the fact that we could do no other, in the circumstances. We have been driven back willy-nilly on "The British Way in Warfare"—instead of pursuing it by choice and design. We have practised it in a confused way, instead of in the best way. As a natural consequence, we and our allies have both suffered needless losses and disasters, to the jeopardy of our future prospects.

Now, after three years of bitter experience, we seem to have cast overboard the Clausewitzian and Continental teaching that "you must concentrate against the main enemy, who must be overthrown first"—and are concentrating against the main enemy's actual "weaker partner."

B. H. LIDDELL HART

N.C.L.C. AND W.E.A.

SIR,—I am glad that Mr. Green does not like abuse, but I regret that his description of his organisation as the only serious body of working-class education is a left-handed reflection on thousands of working-class students from about forty of the principal trades unions in this country who, after their daily work, sometimes even in blitzed areas, come home and attend classes or do essays as correspondence course students. I see the work of these students fairly regularly, and many of them could hold their own in intelligent and knowledgeable discussion with any of Mr. Green's tutors. Were they readers of the NEW STATESMAN they could safely be left to deal with Mr. Green's imputation. While normally it might be claimed that the professional in sport and education is more efficient than the amateur, it can hardly be disputed that the National Council of Labour Colleges could not command the services of large numbers of voluntary tutors, unless they were at least serious enough to sacrifice their time and energy to give of their best. It was by such people that the Labour Movement itself was built up, and I am proud to be of their company. Incidentally the National Council of Labour Colleges by its work attracts the overwhelming majority of worker students. They decide the issue by their work.

ARTHUR WOODBURN

House of Commons,
S.W.1.

"TIME AND THE TIMELESS"

SIR,—I do not believe as a rule in answering a reviewer, but Professor Stebbing's review of my *Time and the Timeless* in your issue of November 28th calls for some comment on my part since by a curious coincidence, an answer to her previous attack upon my views in her *Ideals and Illusions* was already being published by the *Tablet*, and I should like to point out that although I have nothing material to add to that answer, it was in fact written before this review appeared.

There are just two new points now raised by Miss Stebbing which I should like to answer briefly:

(1) My judgment of the state of modern man is based on personal acquaintance with him. I live in modern times and know a great many people; I read the books of others I do not know; I read the newspapers and hear the wireless; I go to the cinema. It is difficult to appraise other times than one's own fairly, so much will depend upon selection, but in the world of thought as expressed in literature and art and history, some comparison can be made between our age and others. I hold no special brief for the Middle Ages, but in my opinion the thought expressed in their different epochs by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross does compare very favourably indeed with that most generally offered to us now by the "Leading thinkers of our day." (To mention them by name would be invidious.)

(2) I am well aware that many people do not believe Christianity to be true; but does Miss Stebbing at all understand what to believe it true in fact, implies? The Christian does believe it true in all its implications, that is the reason why he is a Christian. He does believe in other-worldly values, based on a supernatural order of being, the Life of Grace, through which Man is raised to a new relationship with God, through which the whole value of our life here is changed. These beliefs may be erroneous, to Miss Stebbing I have no doubt they seem absurd, but that the Christian holds them is a matter of fact, and any attempt to assess the Christian position without some realisation of their meaning is useless. For fuller treatment of this issue may I refer Miss Stebbing to last week's *Tablet*?

ROSALIND MURRAY

3F Morpeth Terrace, S.W.1.

"THIS ENGLAND"

SIR,—Under the heading "This England" in to-day's issue you quote the *Manchester Guardian* as saying "The Beveridge scheme caused more depression than any war news since the British battleships were sunk off Singapore almost a year ago." By giving a sentence which is torn from its essential context you convey the impression that the *Manchester Guardian* editorially made a ridiculous statement about the general reception of the Beveridge scheme. Actually the sentence is the first in a Stock Exchange report, and is printed immediately under the headline "Stock Exchange, London, Wednesday."

W. P. CROZIER,
The *Manchester Guardian*. Editor

[We apologise for not making it clear that this statement was from a Stock Exchange report. May we also take this opportunity of reminding readers that "This England" is intended as an amusing feature where we are ourselves as liable to be quoted as anyone else? It is intended only to raise a smile at some oddity of British life, thought or language, not to hurt anyone's feelings.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*].

Next week's Christmas issue will contain among other features a new short story by V. S. Pritchett, and the second of Kingsley Martin's series of articles on the United States.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

If, in the Seventies, a roomful of well-educated men had been asked who was the most profound thinker among contemporary Englishmen, the usual answer, I fancy, would have been Herbert Spencer. He was considered the Spinoza of his time, because he had provided it with a *Weltanschauung*. He did more than any other Englishman to popularise agnosticism and the belief in evolution. His influence was world-wide, his books were translated into Japanese and Iroquois. When he died, in 1903, at the age of eighty-three, the Italian Chamber of Deputies is said to have adjourned as a tribute to his memory. Already, however, he had outlived a considerable part of his reputation. To-day his volumes stand on the shelf beneath the dust of decades signifying oblivion. Of all the eminent Victorians he is the least read, for who now would trouble even to confute him? Only a few very old people can still remember how gigantic, how portentous, he once loomed above the Victorian scene.

Yet he deserves to be remembered, this solemn philosopher, as one of the major English eccentrics. His memoirs are long-winded, so is the official *Life* by David Duncan, but I recommend two accounts of him, one in Mrs. Sidney Webb's *My Apprenticeship*—which is one of the best autobiographies of our time, the other in *Home Life with Herbert Spencer*, by Two.

Spencer adored children—this, indeed, was his most endearing characteristic—and he used to "borrow" the children of his friends, that is, have them to stay and fuss like any granny over their diet and their clothing. To the young Beatrice Potter (the future Mrs. Webb) he was the most appreciative and stimulating of guides, and her account of him is beautifully done. "Poor Spencer," her father said, "He lacks instinct, my dear, he lacks instinct—you will learn that instinct is as important as intellect." Though the philosopher had the pain of seeing his young friend marry a socialist, he remained fond of her, and she speaks with enthusiasm of his "amazing loyalty to a disinterested aim." *Home Life with Herbert Spencer* is a limpidly truthful account by two ladies with whom he made a business arrangement to share a house. It has the ingenuous charm of a portrait by a Primitive, which offers, one is sure, a speaking likeness.

> He used to return from the club at about nine in the evening, and sit with us for about an hour, and if the conversation proved too trying for him he would produce his ear-stoppers and shut himself off from the world of sound. These ear-stoppers were formed of a band almost semi-circular in shape, with a little velvet-covered knob at either end, which was pressed by the spring in the band on the flaps over the hole of each ear. . .
>
> He never cared for appearances, and would often pull up his carriage with a stentorian shout of "Stop!" to the coachman, no matter where he might be, whether in a quiet place or in the middle of the busiest traffic in Regent Street. The carriage was at once brought to a standstill, and silence reigned therein for some few seconds. This, we soon learnt, was in order that he might feel his pulse. If it was regular, the drive was continued; if not, and he feared injurious consequences, the order was given to return home.

When he went by train he had a hammock slung across the compartment to minimise the agitation. Also "he tied a thick piece of string round his waist which could not be seen—one end, however, was left two or three yards long, and this issued like a tail from underneath the back of his coat, and to its end the MS. of his current book was attached, made into a brown paper parcel, which he then easily held in his hand." He was very particular about furniture, and his favourite shade was what he described as "impure purple"; he had gloves of this colour, his books are bound in it. He liked also artificial flowers, and when his fellow lodgers teased him about this he pointed to a painting, "Why in the world, now, do you object to artificial flowers in a room any more than to an artificial landscape?" He wanted "a bronze" for his drawing-room but failed to find one. Invited to explain why so simple a thing as a pleasing bronze could not be found in London: "The fact is," he replied, "most of the bronzes are French, and French art, if not sanguinary, is usually obscene." An ardent disciple who came to the house was very rude to the servants: when told of this Spencer assumed an expression of quiet serenity, and pronounced: "Miss —— will find nothing in my writings to justify disagreeable conduct to servants!"

Such stories—and I wish I could quote more of them—are significant as well as amusing. Spencer consciously aimed at living purely by reason; one of the chief dictates of reason was to enjoy pleasurable, and avoid painful, sensations. But those pursuits must be avoided which give more pain to others than pleasure to oneself. Football was brutalising, boat-racing and chess inflicted humiliation upon the loser, while billiards did not incur ethical condemnation. Spencer, it happened, liked playing billiards, but was no good at chess, or, one imagines, at football or boat-racing. The vast *System of Synthetic Philosophy* with its volumes on Ethics, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, was, in fact, vitiated from its conception. It pretended to be inductive, and was merely a series of deductions, based upon Spencer's prejudices and bolstered up by a mass of selected, and not always very carefully selected, evidence. Believing himself to be the most rational of men, he was one of the most blinkered, the most grossly intuitive. "You know Spencer's idea of a tragedy," Huxley remarked; "it is a deduction killed by a fact." But Spencer was solicitous to avert his gaze from such tragedies. His whole monumental *Weltanschauung* was constructed upon a few simple notions that he had acquired in his youth. 1. War is the supreme evil. (His father regularly attended a Quaker meeting-house.) 2. *Laissez faire* is a law of nature, every infraction of which must have bad effects. (He was brought up among Radicals.) 3. Evolution is a law that applies to everything from nebulæ to oil-paintings, and biological evolution depends chiefly on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. That there was no valid evidence for such inheritance did not disturb him. Was he not himself evidence for it? His hands were small, because his father and grandfather had wielded no tool heavier than a pen. And his character—even its faults resulted from his father and grandfather having acquired the characteristics of schoolmasters. Half a teacher's time is spent in exposition, the other half in criticism; the presence of his pupils establishes him always as the supreme authority. For this reason, Spencer explains, he always lacked respect for authority; and his impatience with accepted views may, he admits, have led him to underestimate the past as compared with the present. Similarly, in æsthetic matters, "the readiness to dwell on defects has diminished the appreciation of beauties, by pre-occupying consciousness."

> Possibly there are perfections in various paintings of the old masters which impress me but little, because I am keenly alive to the many mistakes in chiaroscuro which characterise them. When I look at Greek sculpture, too, I constantly observe how unnatural and inartistic is the drapery.

A few days in Rome showed him how preposterously men overrated Raphael and Michelangelo. (An R.A. whom he consulted entirely agreed with him.) When he visited Holland, "the picture-galleries were seen, and of course many adverse criticisms were passed by me."

> When, occasionally, I succeed in restraining myself from making a comment on something wrongly said or executed, I have a feeling of discomfort, as though I had left undone something which should have been done.

This again he attributed to the inheritance of an acquired characteristic. Probably his self-conceit—what is the English equivalent of *suffisance*?—was congenital; but also he was, in the worst sense, self-educated. A lack of knowledge facilitated a lack of humility. He assumed that accepted beliefs were likely to be wrong; and not only was he himself often demonstrably mistaken, but even when he was right others had often reached previously the same conclusion. When this was pointed out he became indignant. Thus his book on education—the only one of his books that still allows itself to be read—obviously owes a lot to Rousseau. When this was mentioned, he protested, in angry good faith, that he had never read Rousseau. He had, however, read Pestalozzi, on whom Rousseau's influence had been powerful. His ignorance was always landing him in similar squabbles.

"He is the most original of thinkers," Huxley said, "though he has never invented a new thought." He strikes one as more than any of the other Victorians the pure product of his time. When he angered or amused his contemporaries by some opinion this was merely the seemingly logical application of a widely accepted idea. Thus he was uncompromising in his condemnation of tipping as an abominable interference with the laws of supply and demand. If you tip a cabman you attract a nimiety of labour into the cab business, and there will, moreover, be a wasteful investment of capital in horses and four-wheelers. Tip a railway porter, and he will be so busy looking after you that the train will start late, and unpunctuality is the chief cause of the alarming increase in railway accidents. Free education was utterly to be condemned, so were free libraries (including the British Museum reading room), so were State sanitary inspectors, so was the State post office. (This neither collected your parcels nor gave you credit, yet so obtuse was the public that nobody made a grievance of it.) Thus a belief in the beneficence of competition was pursued to a *reductio ad absurdum*. On the other hand I have found not a word in all he has written on sociology and ethics about such tricky matters as suicide and contraception. Indeed, he passes rapidly over sexual ethics with a commendation of monogamy and a warning against over-indulgence in its solaces. (Once, we are told, he discovered that his landlady had been divorced, which so horrified him that he left at once: "that kind of laxity was most abhorrent to him.")

Galton, who greatly admired him, recounts that, when downed in an argument, he would feel his pulse and then say "I must not talk any more." The pains he took to avoid over-excitement were measureless. He used to dictate for ten minutes, then row or play racquets for ten minutes, then return to his dictation. He has much to say about his chronic ill-health, which made it impossible for him to listen to the piano for so much as an hour twice a week or even to play spillikins. The mildest excitement deprived him of sleep. He took a grain and a half of opium every night, he never consented to the extraction of his decayed teeth, and so there were physical reasons for his ill-health. But I think there can be no doubt that he was also profoundly neurotic. Irritable, fussy, tactless, censorious, self-centred, all to an unusual degree, he revealed—even in his ostentatious ferreting out of *reasons* for conduct—a deep, a more morbid than intellectual, distrust of common sense. It is pathetic as well as comic to see this great lumbering machine grind away under the illusion that it was ratiocinating when it was only fumbling to find pretexts for its prejudices. (The psychologists had not yet invented the concept of rationalisation.) Coal-scuttles embellished with a photograph surrounded with elaborate gilding were to be deplored. One agrees. But so were silver butter-knives; so was cochineal—"passion for appearance carried to such an extent that to make a shaped cream attractive it is coloured with the crimson juice of a creature which, when alive, looks like a corpulent bug." This so unphilosophic reason for deploring cochineal seems to me highly characteristic. What wonder that the admirable Canon Barnett, on whom when travelling in Egypt Spencer was intolerably foisted, complained that he was "small in character," so suspicious was he so given to constant consideration of himself. The great man found the Nile most disappointing: "There should," he solemnly proclaimed, "be some punishment for people who lead one to these places by false representations." The philosopher, so vocal against Imperialism, so austere

in his disgust at all conquests of savage peoples, was no less indignant when the Barnetts gave some medical relief to Egyptian villagers. It was not worth while, he explained, to increase the health or preserve the life of anyone who was "barbarian."

Mrs. Webb's final picture of him is no less dismal: "If I believed in induction," he wailed to her, "I should be forced to believe that I was being pursued by demons." "And who knows?" he added in strangely humble tones, "The veil may be lifted: it may be so." And all this, she explains, "because one or two persons with whom he had been casually connected have misbehaved themselves with women, and thus imperilled his reputation!" The unhappy man had survived to see the world sinking increasingly into what he considered the two most calamitous evils. "A bad time coming," he noted in the Nineties, "an era of social cannibalism." Militarism and the power of the State were, in his opinion, inseparable. When men's ideas are constantly fixed upon the "State" or the "Government" as an agency which *does* things, wars are bound to be frequent. The civil service, moreover, in a socialist society would necessarily become "a new aristocracy for the support of which the masses would toil and which, being consolidated, would wield a power far beyond that of any past aristocracy."

It may be argued that history has not yet given the lie to his forebodings. Bellicosity and the power of the State have, in fact, increased concurrently. But Spencer strikes me, above all, as a cautionary instance. There is a lot of loose talk now about the paramount value of faith, as if the Germans were not proof enough of the abysses to which faith, uncontrolled by reason, is likely to lead. But if we believe in reason—and I do believe that deficiency of intellect rather than of goodness is chiefly to blame for our current miseries—it becomes of the first importance to realise how easily prejudice can disguise itself as reason. I would recommend Spencer as an antidote not to reason, but to the belief that reason is easy to apply. RAYMOND MORTIMER

NEW NOVELS

The Song of Bernadette. By FRANZ WERFEL. *Hamish Hamilton.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By. By SIMENON. *Routledge.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Hotel Splendide. By LUDWIG BEMELMANS. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

In the generic term of fiction are included books which range from near-autobiography to myth and fairy story. Between the two stands the pure novel, itself capable of infinite subdivisions of classification. As the minute categories shift across the enormous scale, so must the criteria of judgment shift in pursuit. The extremes are as distinct as prose from poetry. Near-autobiography, those books in which we are told that names and characters have been altered to avoid embarrassment, must be judged primarily by the interest of the facts. Imagination plays an auxiliary role, extracting as much as possible from the factual bones. The pure novel succeeds or fails by its capacity to sharpen our perception. Facts are subsidiary here to the imaginative general statement. In myth and fairy story fiction comes closest to poetry, and the criteria become so purely of the imagination that objective criticism is severely strained. The only standard by which all forms can be judged is the standard of truth—in the first category factual truth, in the second intellectual or psychological truth, in the third the obscure truth of imaginative integrity. The subdivisions of each category can easily be seen by contrasting the picaresque, pre-nineteenth-century novel with more recent developments. It is impossible to judge *Tom Jones* by the intentions of *The Golden Bowl*.

Franz Werfel's book is a pitfall for the reviewer since, though classification must precede judgment, classification is here almost impossible. The origin of *The Song of Bernadette* is a striking one. Werfel, already a refugee from Nazi Austria, escaped from Paris to London in the summer of 1940. With the German troops close behind him he made a solemn vow to Bernadette that if he reached safety he would write a book in her praise. With so unusual a motive it is hardly strange that the book should elude all normal categories. And yet this difficulty would never have arisen if Werfel hadn't deliberately chosen to sing his song in the form of a novel.

The blurb claims that the interest of the book depends on the repercussions of Bernadette's vision, not on their authenticity. Werfel himself insists that he is a Jew and not a Catholic. But all this is misleading. One would hardly vow to a saint a social study of the temporal reactions to her sanctity, and nor has Werfel done so. He has written a panegyric, a song of praise, a humble offering of faith and gratitude. This is not a piece of historical research; if it were it could be judged by the relatively simple standard of historical accuracy. Nor is it intended to be a fairy story. In his introduction the author claims that he has invented only the temporal details of the story; the great spiritual foundation is true. But is it true? On the reader's answer to that must largely depend his appreciation of the book.

Largely, but fortunately for the reviewer not entirely, belief in Bernadette's visions doesn't entail uncritical admiration for every writer who shares the belief. Nor does disbelief leave one altogether helpless. The extremes of the book are lyric poetry and caustic fiction, and both these can be judged by their own standards. The lyric poetry is invoked whenever the Virgin appears and whenever Bernadette's mood is mystical. Judged by the criteria of fact or fairy story and irrespective of belief or disbelief, these passages are tawdry and usually sentimental—as remote from great catholic literature as the painted images in shops are from Raphael or El Greco.

"All floating, dainty maidenhood. . . ." "The most beautiful one" . . . "waves of love-thrilled consolation rolled over Bernadette's heart." At best such language is inadequate, and I imagine that believers will find it even less satisfactory than disbelievers. On the other hand, Werfel has a keen and subtle sense of the ridiculous. The reactions to the visions of municipal dignitaries and politicians are amusingly and brilliantly described. (Further facts can be found in Zola's *Lourdes*.) There are many minor portraits which show that this is a novelist of real quality, and the interest of the subject is enough to overcome the weaknesses in treatment. When the whole purpose of the book is a mystical dedication it seems harsh to praise it for its least mystical qualities. But Werfel is not the only modern writer of distinction whose works have suffered from the infusion of mysticism.

To turn from Werfel to Simenon is to cross the Rhine. Simenon is seated in the saddle of a tradition, while most German novelists ride precariously bareback. Here is a French novel of the second rank, bedded like a semi-precious stone in a setting of pure gold. Not that *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By* is exquisite in any sense except its perfect conciseness, its limited, but deliberately limited, penetration. It is a jewel in its self-awareness. The critic is abashed by the conviction that Simenon has known precisely what he wanted to do, and has done it. The book is a careful and analytical study of paranoia. A Dutch shipping official who has lived a normal bourgeois life for forty years is suddenly deflected into a path of homicide and eventual madness.

The penetration lies in Simenon's ability to see

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hrough Popinga's eyes and to show the sane orld in a new and dubious light. There are oments in the book when the reader is bound to ssociate himself more or less wholeheartedly ith the madman, or at least with the madman's egant internal logic.

And how admirably, as always, Simenon an construct an atmosphere to clothe his story! his novel begins in the most respectable of utch middle-class circles, and shifts to the aris underworld. From the first murky scene in he Groningen pub to Popinga's final capture on the uburban line outside Paris, we live entranced in vivid world of *bistros*, prostitutes and cheap otels. One of the most difficult technical tasks to make a fugue of story and background, to reserve the delicate balance of the counter-point. ow often a novel wearies one by the mechanical ar-lines dividing a chunk of scenery from a chunk f dialogue or introspection. It is in such chnical difficulties as this that the French ovelist has an unlimited advantage over the erman. Simenon has inherited a sense of alance which is invaluable, and in comparison erfel, for all his talents, seems almost a eginner.

It is late in the day and late in this review to ake any statement on national characteristics. ut may not one of the reasons for the weakness f the German novel be a certain lack of astrinency in the German *Geist?* The very absence f hard and fast rules makes internal discipline ore necessary in the novel than in almost any ther art form. In art the Germans are more onspicuous for expansiveness than for the kind f discipline which Flaubert was able to impose n himself.

Mr. Bemelmans would be an effective contraiction to this generalisation if it were not for he fact that he left his native Regensburg as a hild and migrated to America. The influence of he *New Yorker* and the American humorous radition has perfectly balanced his native magination. These stories of a luxury hotel taff are as funny as anything I have read this ear. They are a unique blend of wit and onsense, of the Marx brothers and the best aroyan. At one moment Mr. Bemelmans is a atirist, beautifully ridiculing the idiocies of the ich, at the next a pure humorist, turning even is own satire to nonsense. The author's hurberesque drawings are as funny as his tories. This is near-autobiography swollen to ntastic proportions by humorous invention.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

COUNTRY LIVING

Irish Heritage. By E. ESTYN EVANS. *Dundalgan Press.* 8s. 6d.

Good Neighbours. By WALTER ROSE. *Cambridge.* 10s. 6d.

THE popular reception of the Scott Report seems to indicate a powerful desire for the revival of village life; but, excellent as the sentiment may be, it is not generally realised that two very different revivals are competing for public favour. Indeed the lack of unanimity in the Scott Committee is a most significant clue to this rivalry of ideals. Broadly speaking, the alternatives are to co-ordinate agriculture within the pattern of modern industrial technique, or to reanimate the farming community in its traditional mode as a particular style of living. It is, I believe, fundamentally a problem of autonomy—of whether the rural community can be so adapted as to become again relatively self-sufficient, or whether it must continue as a mere dormitory outpost of urban culture. The immediate value of Dr. Evans and Mr. Rose is that, in their very different ways, they recall some of the details of those rural traditions which govern our heritage; and whether we aim to reinforce or transform them, we shall do well to understand their evolution and the kind of social context in which they flourished.

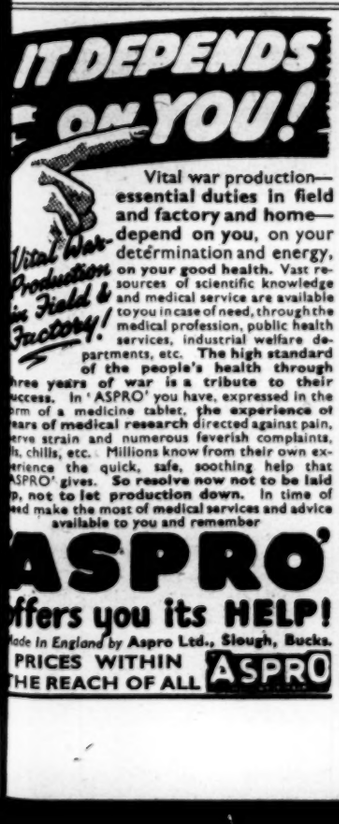
Dr. Evans's interest is in scientific research. His *Irish Heritage* is an enquiry into the methods and equipment of Irish agriculture from the earliest times. Enriched with Dr. Evans's many sketches this is a most valuable documentation. Much of it is, in the best sense, museum work; but there are also some acute reflections on the influence of agriculture on such things as house-distribution, interior design, and the development of ancillary crafts. How profound this influence may be is indicated by the comment that arable farming (with its greater variety of implements) is more conducive to arts and crafts than pastoral farming—a comment which forcefully underlines the moulding effect of soil and climate on culture. Comparisons with contemporary things are sometimes striking. I noticed one ancient implement in Dr. Evans's illustrations which is virtually reproduced in a smart new patent masher recently marketed in this country for crushing war-time "scraps"; and there is a fascinating sidelight on the country practice of running a goat with milch-cows. Nowadays this is said to prevent contagious abortion in the cows—indeed, my neighbour keeps a goat in that belief, and for all I know it may be true—but I like Dr. Evans's suggestion that the practice goes back to the time of woodland grazing, when the goats served to destroy tree-growth. His whole account of primitive farming is most instructive—particularly in the section on "booleying" (which means migrating to hill-pastures between seed-time and harvest). In *Irish Heritage* Dr. Evans has certainly made an important contribution to the study of rural history.

The same may be said of *Good Neighbours*, with this difference: whereas Dr. Evans writes as an objective student in general terms, Mr. Rose draws his material from an intimate personal knowledge of the Buckinghamshire village in which he has spent his life. In a comparison between the two books *Good Neighbours* has the advantage of individual portraits and the brighter colours of anecdote. Mr. Rose is a keen but kindly student of the ways of men, and he can draw from a richly stored memory. In his childhood he was accustomed to hear at first hand of pre-enclosure days, of which he gives a strikingly vivid account, and he recalls reaping with sickles and threshing with flails. All through the book there is a subdued tension between poverty and a frugal industriousness—the labourer's pig and his potato patch were not merely a useful sideline, they were a vital defence against hunger. Mr. Rose's lively appreciation of the cottage pig is delightfully done. Many readers, I think, will choose it as the best chapter in the book. The account of intensive duck-breeding for the London market is another fine passage, with its keen reflection of rural thrift:

> The money that ducking brought in was hardly earned, for often the price dropped as low as half a crown a head. Yet some folk saved enough by it to buy their own cottages; and now and then the thriftiest made it their first stepping-stone to rise above the position of a labourer, and eventually to take land on their own as small farmers.

Thrift, self-respect and a craftsman's engrossed preoccupation with the technique and achievements of his job—these are the main characteristics of Mr. Rose's "good neighbours." As a realistic, unsentimental but sympathetic picture of village life, *Good Neighbours* is as authentic and creditable as anything we have had in recent years. The quality of the writing is scarcely adequate to sustain the book among the few classics of its kind, but the solid worth of Mr. Rose's detail quite outclasses such literary candy as Edmund Blunden's *English Village*.

DESMOND HAWKINS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HIS WORLD AND OURS

My World—And Welcome to It. By JAMES THURBER. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7s. 6d.

A new book by Thurber induces—what exactly? Not confidence, not self-satisfaction; rarely has the human plight been more disturbingly suggested. A fellow feeling, rather. The revelations on every page are appalling. "It struck him that perhaps Madge had no subconscious. When she lay on her back, her eyes closed; when she got up, they opened, like a doll's." The *News of the World* never made one's flesh creep like that. And, in another story, someone called Irma looks up from reading a detective story and says to her uneasy mate: "You're tightening up again, I can feel it." She would be called Irma, of course. Even the names in a Thurber book are awe-compelling. What about Mr. Peffifoss? He's an official in the Connecticut Telephone Company who changes the "peaceful old rural phone numbers" into terrible new ones. He is always clapping his hands for his secretary. "Take a number change, Miss Rettig," he says. "New Milford 905 ring 4 to be changed to Pussymeister W-7 oh 8 oh 96 j-4." Mr. Peffifoss's full name—it leaks out gradually—is Rudwooll Yurmurm Peffifoss. Nothing more to be said about that. In a few sentences the bold labels and solid outlines of one's fellow human being have sagged alarmingly and nothing remains except an amoeba-like form with a startled eye in which one sees, only too plainly, one's own reflection. A sinking feeling accompanies the laughter of anyone engaged in reading Thurber; the jokes have all been salvaged from dreams. Bump!—it is oneself that has slipped on the banana skin. Whether the word for this suffering and awareness of catastrophe is humour, I don't know. Thurber does make me laugh, but I become engulfed, I am less and less sure of myself as I read on.

My World—And Welcome to It is only occasional Thurber: sketches, travel pieces, social and historical essays, bits of autobiography, explorations of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, stories that shift from domestic comedy to sheer murder. Forty pages or so are inspired; the rest is very good entertainment. He never writes badly, and even the least personal of these essays—the reviews of old *Punches* and of French restaurants—appeal to a latent hysteria. Coming over to Europe before the war he read on the boat Alexander Werth's *Which Way France?*—a Thurber title, if you like—and found this footnote:

> Most of the Left Republicans in the Chamber of Deputies do not belong to the Left but to the Centre, and are not really Left Republicans at all but members of the *Alliance Democratique* party. Many of the Popular Democrats, who belong to the Right, are really Left—or at any rate more Left than the Left Republicans, who belong to the Centre.

This is Thurber's summary, but I doubt if he has distorted much. He could do pretty well with the politics of the English-speaking democracies. Thurberism, in fact, is gaining ground everywhere.

G. W. STONIER

BRITAIN IN PICTURES

British Birds. By JAMES FISHER. **British Romantic Artists.** By JOHN PIPER. **Fairs, Circuses and Music Halls.** By M. WILLSON DISHER. *Collins.* 4s. 6d.

Mr. Fisher's text is admirably stimulating. He treats his subject historically and statistically, explaining the changes in the bird-population caused by alterations in the environment. Although Europe has few birds compared with South America, over four hundred species have been recorded in the British Isles, of which 133 both breed and winter here. Egg-collectors and gamekeepers have almost succeeded in extinguishing several species: the last sea-eagle disappeared over twenty years ago. But more care is now taken, and since the bombs redstarts have been singing in Central London.

Mr. Willson Disher provides a miscellany of entertaining facts about midgets and acrobats and "pig-faced ladies" and jugglers and trick-riders and showmen. The subject-matter is too extensive, and the music-hall has had a raw deal. But the book would make a gay and appropriate Christmas card, and Mr. Willson Disher speaks with authority.

Mr. John Piper might be criticised for having flung his net too wide: neither the Sickert nor the Wilson Steer he reproduces is "romantic" unless one uses the term merely to mean non-Italianate are very well chosen, notably the Cozens, the Constable drawing, the Ford Madox Brown and the Innes. Pinwell is more sentimental than poetic or picturesque. The fate for the "picturesque" was originally a taste for landscapes recalling those created by such artists as Claude and Salvator. Later the Romantic Movement divided, in painting as in literature, into two channels, the realistic and the fantastic. Constable corresponds to Wordsworth, Bewick to Dorothy Wordsworth; Fuseli to De Quincey, John Martin to Robert Montgomery. Samuel Palmer may be called the most English of romantic painters, for he is almost unique in showing no foreign influence. It is a pity that Mr. Piper has not reproduced any of his own work, for especially in his topographical book he admirably continues the early 19th century tradition. His book is packed with interest, and can be confidently recommended.

The texts of the three latest *Britain in Pictures* books are well up to the standard we have come to expect. The illustrations in Mr. Piper's book are regrettable. The off-set process employed lacks transparency, so that Cotman appears to have used treacle instead of water-colour. The plates, some of them after Audubon, in Mr. Fisher's book are better, because the colours are simpler, but some lack precision of outline. The illustrations in Mr. Disher's book are the best yet produced in the series, partly because printed on a surfaced paper.

NATIONAL SOUNDS

Music in England. By ERIC BLOM. *Penguin Books.* 9d.

The Music of Czecho-Slovakia. By ROSA NEWMARCH. *Oxford University Press.* 8s. 6d.

Now that we have started blowing our own trumpet again, for a most necessary change, few critics are better fitted than Mr. Blom to do this for us in the sphere of music. Combining the erudition of a musicologist with the training of a columnist, he has achieved to admiration the supremely difficult task of compression demanded by a book of this kind. Even a specialist can read his pages with profit, while to the layman they can be recommended as consistently lively and well proportioned. Mr. Blom's theme is, simply, the greatness of English music—a theme not as difficult to develop as those trained in the German school of criticism would have us think. For he shows—and shows, I think, conclusively—that from the 16th century to the beginning of the 19th, English music was not inferior to that of any other country. If at that moment we abdicated completely in favour of Germany and Italy, that fact should not be allowed to obscure the upward trend which started again round 1880 and is perhaps approaching its peak to-day. Too little justice is usually done to composers like Parry and Stanford, some of whose best work one is given no opportunity of hearing. In a sense, of course, the fault is theirs: Parry, for instance, might have been a great composer if the circumstances of his life, and, above all, his kind heart and charming manners, had not always been exhorting him to write something or other for dear Doctor So-and-So of Barchester Cathedral. There are moments when one cannot help feeling that a certain ruthlessness is inseparable from the condition of a great artist: men like Parry and Mendelssohn and Stravinsky point the lesson.

Mr. Blom puts his finger lightly on many spots, of which not the least important is the close collaboration between composers and poets in the 16th and 17th centuries. This interrelation dwindled in the 18th century and failed altogether to strike fire in the 19th; yet it is, I believe, a *sine qua non* of a healthy musical tradition. In the 19th century it was the novelists and poets who held the stage, at the turn of the 16th century the dramatists; and, as Mr. Blom pertinently suggest, both Weelkes and Wilbye were composers of sufficient genius to have invented English opera if they had not been crowded off the stage by Shakespeare and the rest. The author is altogether at his best in these early chapters, though I can't help thinking him slightly off the point when he contrasts the contemporary German singing of Dowland in the German language with our "snobbish inhibition about translations into the vernacular" of Schubert and Wolf. I should have thought the inhibition was due rather to the unpleasing and absurd effect, when sung, of the closed vowels of modern English—vowels which, in the days of Dowland, were, it would seem, far more open in sound. When it comes to our own day, the account becomes skimpy and the observations on the music of Cyril Scott suggest that the desire to avoid causing pain has been a paramount consideration. Even so, and within its scope, the book as a whole could hardly have been better.

Compared with Mr. Blom, Mrs. Newmarch must appear old-fashioned in the worst sense. Perhaps it is unfair to consider her as a critic, which she never pretended to be, and certainly nobody with an atom of generosity could wish to deny her her peculiar position in the history of public music-making in this country. How often, in our teens, have we all sat in the Queen's Hall reverently trying to follow some symphonic poem or other in Mrs. Newmarch's flowery "analysis"! And as often, just as we were looking out for that "note of tragedy" (always a string tremolando) at the beginning of the second section, the work would suddenly and disconcertingly come to an end, leaving us persuaded that something must be very wrong either with Mrs. Newmarch or with us. Accuracy was not her strong point: even in this book she confuses Dvorák's early D Minor Symphony (originally op. 13) with the late symphony in the same key (op. 70); and there are other lapses. But as an introduction to a subject of which too few people in this country know more than the rudiments, this book will be welcome, for the corpus of Czech music is among the richest and most individual in the world.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Letters from Syria. By FREYA STARK. *John Murray.* 9s.

This book of letters describes Miss Freya Stark's first encounter with the Near East. Famous now for her accurate and eloquent account of Persia, Bagdad, and the Hadramaut, Miss Stark went to Syria in 1927 to recover from an illness and to learn Arabic. Having acquired a good measure of colloquial Arabic in a village near Beirut she travelled with a friend through the Druse villages to the south of Damascus. She had some trouble with the French, who could not understand the motives for her presence and suspected her of being a spy. Miss Stark discovered quickly a natural liking for Oriental peoples, and an outstanding talent for describing them. Nobody who has travelled in Syria could read her letters without both deep pleasure and nostalgic pain.

Midget Books. *Chatto and Windus.* 2d. each. **Ring-a-ring of Roses,** 1s.; **An A.B.C. in Pictures,** 6d.; **An A.B.C. for Jim,** 6d.; **A Railway A.B.C.,** 2s. 6d. **Quiz,** 4d. *Faber.*
Broadsheets. *Chatto and Windus.* 6d. each.

Here is a charming new idea for children's Christmas cards: a twelve-page booklet the size of a large exhibition stamp, with a gaily coloured drawing on each page. The subjects of the Chatto 2d. series range from insects and animals to the story of Bethlehem, Eskimo life, Queen Victoria and the story of a loaf of bread. Artist, J. Ritchie.

Four of the Faber booklets are A.B.C.s and the fourth is a quiz on nursery rhymes. "With a roly-poly gammon and spinach," for example, appears on one

age of the quiz, illustrated by a froggy wearing a orning suit and carrying a bouquet, and you are ked to say which is the nursery rhyme referred to. his little booklet of eight pages has been charmingly ecuted by Enid Marx. The A.B.C.s by Vivian idler are also attractive, though instructional. The ore grown-up of them, *An A.B.C. in Pictures*, has for Gossip, M for Muse (the verb, not the noun) nd X for Xylophone. Schoolboys especially will find the *Railway A.B.C.*—more elaborate and larger han the others—the perfect subject for Christmas udy. The broadsheets combine patriotism with legance—rare conjunction. Subjects include five Wordsworth sonnets, a story by Andersen and Queen lizabeth's address to the people at Tilbury.

enguin New Writing, Numbers 13 and 14.

With No. 13, Mr. Lehmann's monthly has become quarterly. A little more space, eight pages of illustraon, new regular features (a discursive book chronicle nd reconsideration of writers) and a larger proportion f unpublished material mark the change. The chief teration, as one looks back, is that the plain reporting f a year or so ago has been superseded by more naginative methods. Each of the new numbers arts with a section called "Report on To-day," in hich several writers pool their experiences. William happell's "The Sky Makes Me Hate It" in No. 13 ves a remarkable and individual picture of army life, nd in No. 14 Christopher Isherwood's account of a y at La Verne reveals, unintentionally, one preames, the demoralising effect on a lively intelligence f being converted to the ideas of Mr. Gerald Heard. his essay, which might have been written by any evotee, is presumably printed as a warning; and the sson is rammed home by a republication of portions f Isherwood's 1923 Berlin Diary. Other notable ems in the two numbers are the anonymous articles n British ballet and British films, and poems by aurie Lee and Roy Fuller.

Week-end Competitions
No. 672

et by G. W. Stonier

The usual prizes are offered for the best account, not more than 150 words, of a depressing hristmas.

ULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number f the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and hould be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great urnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor y first post on Monday, December 28th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 669

Set by Thomas Smallbones

You are 21, and you have just seen the engagement announced between your father and a girl of your own age and set. The usual prizes are offered for an extract (not more than 150 words) from your letter of congratulation which will include advice useful to a parent marrying into your generation.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

In a large and varied entry what surprised me was the persistence with which the conventional distinction between the generations lingers. "Victorianism" in the elder: cocktails, jazz and film-going among the younger. The latter especially struck me since these were the complaints against boisterous youth in the 1920s when I was young. (I should have thought film-going, for instance, was an accepted habit except among the very aged.) But an additional interest in judging was trying to gauge from the type of complaint the age of the competitot: some of the older generation plainly using the latter to work off a grouse or two against their juniors and *vice versa*. The three or four competitors who sprinkled their letters with "old beans" and "old tops," for example, I guessed to be about 70, psychologically if not physically.

A more successful line was to place the parent as belonging to what one parent called the "tousled Twenties and the thirsty Thirties," and caution against lack of seriousness. "The insufferable tolerance and charm of your lot doesn't go down nowadays. I've been through that phase myself and know how pathetic it all is . . . besides a permanancy's very different from the three days affairs you've been used to" (Ignotus). Or again at its more extreme "You will find her a fluent conversationalist—on statistics, Stalin, Stakhanovism and the Second Front. Smut is barred; it is known to be a Fascist device to undermine the workers' morale." (T. L. Littlewood.) Incidentally, I guessed the age of this group of competitors to between 30 and 40.

I should have earmarked a prize for anyone who had shown an exact sense of period taste. In this group Olric came nearest with "In your conversation you should substitute Helpmann for Massine, Eliot for Yeats, Laski for Sidney Webb, gin and lime for Tio Pepe and Tommy Trinder for George Robey." But this is not very exact.

The first prize goes to Maurice for a letter sketching a type which, if not general, recognisably still exists. From the runners-up, Leslie Johnson ("Prunella is both mentally and financially independent and your viewpoints may not coincide, so make allowances even in preference to an allowance"); Constance Sewell (". . . Poppet so mature and you so contemporary . . . That for you was 1925 with Wadsworth and Matthew Smith painting away, Corbusier and Gropius changing architecture, and psychology . . ."); F.C.C. (a brief telegram "Et tu Brute?"); R. Padley ("Your job now is to forget the Folly of Age and to recapture the Wisdom of Youth"); X.Y.Z. ("You must not be too parental in your treatment of the newcomer. You have me on whom to exercise that well-developed side of your character, and I have learned not to mind. She hasn't"). I finally selected Kenneth Hudson as the winner of the second prize.

FIRST PRIZE.

. . . Congratulations! Yet I am worried. You always said you couldn't understand *my* generation. I wouldn't want this to spoil things. Let me tell you, then, that my female contemporaries are perverse, persistent, predatory and promiscuous. If you really want her to do anything, always suggest the opposite (e.g., if you want her to think you young, keep on calling yourself an old buffer). Appear interested in all she does and says, however innane—particularly in wearisome reminiscences about previous lovers. Be charmed by her foibles, respect her taste. Do not try to improve her mind; she will only embarrass you later by joining in intellectual conversations with your friends. Give her most of your money and all your coupons. Her attitude to sex is probably pornographic, so say much more than you do.

(MAURICE CRANSTON)

SECOND PRIZE.

. . . Anne's looking ahead of course, and if she plumps for a domestic life she wants continuity. Congratulations on representing it. She'd probably have married Gerald or me if it hadn't been obvious that we shouldn't be in a reserved occupation in 1950 or even 1960. Evidently, she's kept her Freud in mind (see you do the same, by the way) and realised she could have the best of both generations by picking you.

You'll find her very easy to get on with, provided you remember that she hasn't any of the failings of your first wife at the same age. Like all my friends, she cooks like a dream, dresses for next-to-nothing, and she'll be able to hand you back some coupons to make yourself look decent with at the end of the year. So don't be old-fashioned enough to treat her as an equal . . .

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